The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Charles W. Ranson:

Optimism of Grace

Roy M. Pearson • Day of the Earthquake

John O. Mellin • The Word Will Stand

Robert Paul Sessions • Days of Decision

Alvin J. Beachy • Mary Magdalene

Fred Luchs • Greatest Drama

C. Willard Fetter • Guests in God's World

Donald E. Lewis • One Among Many

O. WALTER WAGNER • KIRCHENTAG

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The Pulpit

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In this Issue —

O. WALTER WAGNER, executive secretary of the Metropolitan Church Federation of St. Louis since 1950, takes an active part in ecumenical affairs both here and abroad. In 1946 he spent four months in Europe as an observer for the Save the Children Foundation. Two years later he returned as a member of the Commission on World Service of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. And last year, in renewing his contacts with German church leaders, he became enthusiastic about their Kirchentag movement.

CHARLES W. RANSON, general secretary of the International Missionary Council since 1947, preached his sermon "The Optimism of Grace" at St. Andrews University, Scotland. Dr. Ranson entered the ministry of the Methodist Church in his native Ireland and began his missionary career in India, where he guided a National Christian Council survey on theological education whose results are reported in one of his books, *The Christian Minister in India.*

JOHN O. MELLIN since 1948 has been pastor of New York's First Presbyterian Church, whose pulpit has been served by such distinguished preachers as Jonathan Edwards, Harry Emerson Fosdick and Julius Moldenhawer.

ROY M. PEARSON, dean of Andover Newton Theological School and an editorial associate of The Pulpit, preached his Easter sermon at Hancock Congregational Church, Lexington, Mass., where he was pastor until the autumn of 1954.

ROBERT PAUL SESSIONS preached his sermon "Days of Decision" on Feb. 12 to his congregation in St. John's Methodist Church, Van Buren, Ark. With an exemplary blend of Christian courage and pastoral affection he deals with the problems involved in the fact that V Buren likely will be the first Arkans community to integrate its pub schools involuntarily, under an order report to the court Aug. 15.

BEN F. LEHMBERG is the pastor First Methodist Church, Colora Springs, Colo.

ALVIN J. BEACHY, now studying Harvard Divinity School for his Th. degree, preached his Easter sermon the First Mennonite Church, Bluffto Ohio, where he was pastor from 19 until early this year. Son of a bish in the Old Order Amish Mennoni Church in Somerset County, Pa., M Beachy prepared for the ministry Messiah Academy, Grantham, Pa., Bluffton College in Ohio, and at Ha ford Theological Seminary While Harvard he holds the pastorate of t First Congregational Church in Some ville, Mass.

FRED LUCHS two years ago becam pastor of the First Congregation Church in Evanston, Ill., where l combines the usual parish duties wi ministry to students of Northweste University.

LUCILLE M. WORSTER is a gradua of Union Theological Seminary and a ordained Congregational minister. H sermon for children was submitted The Pulpit by her husband, Raymon G. Worster, minister of Washingto Congregational Church, Toledo, Ohio.

C. WILLARD FETTER, another editori associate of The Pulpit, is the ministe of First Church, Evangelical Unite Brethren, in Akron, Ohio.

DONALD E. LEWIS is the minister o Eastport Methodist Church in An napolis, Md. As he mentions in his se mon, he saw service in two wars—as rifleman in World War II and as chaplain in Korea.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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Memo:

WORKING for a magazine like The Pulpit gives a man a whole new slant on preaching. isn't just that sermon manuscripts are here to be ad by the bushel. It isn't just that a stumbling actitioner suddenly finds himself testing and judging the work of his peers. These editorial responsibilities would be enough to set anyone thinking more analytilly about preaching than he ever did while busy ing it himself.

But besides that, an editor occasionally has Sunys in the pew, so that he who has preached to mself and to others finally gets a chance to be eached at. Just sitting below the pulpit is no sign, course, that the preaching gets through to the eacher in the pew. Warned as we are by our semary teachers that we must check professional conderations and judgments in the narthex when we with the congregation, still it is hard not to row ourselves into the preaching in a way not actly fair to the preacher up front, whom we came hear.

I, at least, have offended terribly at this point. eretofore I have regularly begun with the reacher, stuck with him through text, topic and troduction, and then taken off on my own homitical flights the first time the development tacked vay from the line of my particular momentum. tting there in the pew, I would mount the pulpit my mind, and extemporize my own end for the her man's beginning. Embarrassed and ashamed my defection, I would tune in on the preacher om time to time, pick up a provocative phrase or ustration, and then I'd be off again, spinning my andestine sermon.

But the Lord has caught me in my selfish sin. is judgment is severe. I have my comeuppance. ow I am an editor. So I must pay attention, hether reading or hearing other men's sermons. hings were far gone, you can see, to require such rastic correction. But I'm trying to learn.

NE of the things I'm learning is that there are ements in great preaching which are not taught most seminaries. And one reason why one of ese elements is not often taught—I can see, now at I come to write about it—is that it is hard to y anything about it without sounding like a comete snob. Risking that, I would still suggest that certain self-awareness is a necessary ingredient in great preaching. Other things being generally equal—conviction, style, material—that preaching will most convict and most convince which is done by a preacher who is most aware of what he is doing and that he is doing it.

That sounds just as bald and bad as I knew it would. Yet it must be said. I have seen it now too often make the difference between a good sermon which got through to the congregation and an equally good sermon that barely dribbled across the pulpit lamp. It is simply not enough to be convinced of what you are saying. It is not enough even to struggle to say here what you believe God has said to you before. Though it sounds rapt and spiritual to say that a preacher's words will bear the weight if he keeps his whole attention on the end piers, God and his people, the facts say not so. A part of the preacher's attention, too, must be put squarely on the preacher and the sermon which he is delivering.

THE sermon is my service of the Word, it is my service to the congregation. But it is more. It is my offering to the Lord. In the relation of God and man the sermon is strictly functional, utilitarian, nothing in itself, instrumental, good only for what it does. But in the preacher's own devotion the sermon is more: it is a creation, an oblation, which he brings out of gratitude to his God. It is part of himself brought at its best as thank-offering to Almighty God. The sermon from the preacher's point of view is part of his living sacrifice. Into it he must consciously and deliberately put his best, into it he must consciously and deliberately put himself. That is, he must stay joyously aware of what he is doing as preacher; he must stay excitingly aware of the act of creation in which he is engaged; he must stay wonderingly but eagerly aware of the participation of his whole person and presence in this creation.

God forgive if anything I've said gives comfort to the show-off. He is the one who contrives to set the sermon at the service of himself, and as such is beneath comment. The plea is, rather, that, like the men who preach most mightily, the rest of us put more of ourselves more consciously at the service of our sermons. Whatever is done through preaching is done by God. But the record is, I am sure, that he uses to best effect those who are most aware of the creative agency to which they are ordained.

T. A. G.

German Churchmen Extend Invitation to American Christians

KIRCHENTAG IS CATCHIN

KIRCHENTAG is rapidly becoming ecumenical without organic relationship to any of the Faith and Order Conferences and without having been born of Amsterdam or Evanston. Kirchentag is ecumenical because it speaks of and to the spiritual needs of every man, in every church in every country. Kirchentag is ecumenical because it avoids organizational red tape and simply invites all Christians in all places to participate. All that is required is a willingness to be led by the spirit of God.

Kirchentag is the witness of the laity to a relevant faith expressed in the daily affairs of the workaday world; experienced in the strain and stress of political tension and lived amidst the complexities of family life made so by an age of revolutionary changes.

Kirchentag is not a church day, as its literal translation suggests. It is the year-round program of Protestant lay participation in the life of the church and culminates each year in a week-long celebration—a celebration of early morning communion services, late morning Bible lectures, midday song festivals, late-day mass meetings and the continuous joy in the confrontation of laity with leaders—with leaders like Von Thadden.

Kirchentag's Founder

It was a rare, rich and rewarding experience to spend two days with the founder of this movement popularly known as Kirchentag. As he sat in our intimate circle of fourteen it was not difficult to see why this Christian layman's movement without parallel anywhere in the world has caught on. In its seventh year it is catching on all around the world. France will hold a Kirchentag this year. Sweden, Belgium and Holland already have their "Kerk en Wereld." England has its Christian Frontier Council and I am here to see about American participation in Frankfurt and a possible counterpart in America.

Kirchentag caught on because Dr. Reinold von Thadden was not afraid to die, nor afraid to live in a time of tension. Looking at him as he sat humbly in the light of the huge picture window, I noticed he was graying considerably and he was thinner than when I saw him shortly after the war. Looking beyond him through the window to the soft snow that was making a winter wonderland out of the garden and orchard in the Bonn suburb, I was struck by the comparative tranquillity of this time as contrasted to the times that had grayed the hair, furrowed the face and torn at the body of this g of a man.

What courage it took for him to resist Hitler write him a strong protest against the cruelti the concentration camps, against his arbitrary rests by his gestapo, against his faking of elec results!

Ecumenical Emphasis

What sadness of soul this man Von Thad must have suffered in those days when his si Elisabeth was sentenced to death by the "Peop Court" for her works of mercy; when his frie Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Friedrich Perels, were e cuted; when his pastor friend, Paul Schneider, beaten to death for preaching in a concentrat camp!

What times of testing he endured in his o prison terms—first in Nazi camps, then in Russ prisons. Von Thadden in prison could sleep w an easy conscience remembering his refusal to ca out an order to execute thirty citizens in Louva

He was speaking now with that voice which, o heard, no one ever forgets. It carries something the sympathy he has had for every living soul a something of the sickness that he has suffered. am glad to open this conference where we shall g particular attention to the ecumenical outreach the Kirchentag." He slipped into German, sayi "Ohne die Oekumene ist es wirklich kein christlic Kirchentag." Without the ecumenical emphasis could not really be a Christian Kirchentag . . . recalled the origin of the Kirchentag and his ope ing words took on the dimensions of this ma faith.

From Despair to Decision

The Kirchentag grew out of the great collap that followed the war. The German people betray by nazism, beaten and broken by the war, livi in the midst of ruins and surrounded by wretche ness on every side, suffered the worst sickness all—the meaninglessness of life. I saw this soul sic ness right after the war and recall writing in m journal, "We are keeping Germany alive by artifici respiration. We are pumping enough economic a into her veins to keep her alive, but unless they fi something to live for, all is in vain."

Von Thadden found that faith, furnished th leadership, funneled the forlorn to the source of h faith. He himself had been strengthened all durin

By O. Walter Wagner

ON ECUMENICALLY

the tragic years by a small intimate group of confessing Christians. He had held evangelical meetings in which many gained new heart to continue the struggle for freedom and faith. Now that the great masses were tempted by despair, he built upon the experience of those evangelical meetings. He called together the laity that had found freedom in holding the faith. At Hanover these Christian laymen discussed ways of putting faith into practice. The results were so compelling that in 1950 the first great mass meeting was held at Essen. The Kirchentag was born. The church was awakened. The Christian layman's movement was giving meaning to the masses.

Six Kirchentags have been held. Each has had a challenging theme. Three hundred thousand came to Essen in 1950 under the theme "Save the Human Being." Somewhat over 400,000 came to Berlin in 1951 to hear "In Spite of All, We Are Still Brothers." In Stuttgart other hundreds of thousands rallied around the theme "Choose Life." "Cast Not Away Your Confidence" was the Hamburg theme. Last year over 650,000 attended in Leipzig; 700,000 are expected to be attracted by the Frankfurt theme, "Be Ye Reconciled To God." Yet Kirchentag is not a church day. It is a year-round program. Study groups are organized in every part of the land. Always the emphasis is on practicing Christianity seven days a week. The culmination of these practicing groups is the week each year in which the whole nation celebrates the glory of having a living faith.

Ecumenical Emphasis This Year

"Kirchentag is a movement. It does not exist only to convene rallies," continued Von Thadden. "No one person shall dominate the scene. What God has brought into being here is not to be confined by boundary lines. It is still a young movement. This work of witness in the everyday world must continue in the whole universal Christian church. Unless it is ecumenical, it is not really Christian."

With that orientation we spent two days developing the program of the Frankfurt Kirchentag. In a very genuine sense Von Thadden is inviting all to participate.

Throughout the two days at Bad Godesberg I became increasingly aware of the democratic nature of the Kirchentag movement. Everyone may come who wishes to attend. Seven hundred thousand are expected to be present for the closing rally on Sunday, August 12. Naturally limited space accommodations mean that only those whose applications are received early will be assured accommodations. When housing quotas are filled, late applicants will be told, "We cannot assure you housing, but we hope you will come on your own and that you will attend the Sunday celebration."

Most of the guests will be housed with families. Hotel space will be at a premium. Cities and suburbs of the Frankfurt area will cooperate in making preparations for the coming of so great a mass of people. Twenty-four working committees are planning every little detail of the hundreds of various programs to be held. All of these committees are volunteer workers woven together in a master plan by the genius of the men whom Von Thadden has associated with him.

American Committee

An American committee under the leadership of Dr. C. Arild Olsen of the National Council of the Churches of Christ is now beginning to function. Those of us who will work on this committee are also members of the Ecumenical Committee in Bad Godesberg, of which Dr. Franklin Littell is general chairman. Our efforts will be directed toward getting Dr. Von Thadden's invitation accepted by American church-minded people. Several hundred thousand Americans will go to Europe for vacations this summer. Many of these we will try to interest in Kirchentag. Church people who wish to experience a vital layman's movement will do well to write at once to Ecumenical Committee, Deutscher Ev. Kirchentag, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, Postfach 7081.

Lest anyone think he cannot afford the registration fee, housing, meals and entertainment costs, I made inquiry before I left as to the cost of the total program from registration to the closing service, including meals and housing, and learned that forty German marks should cover expenses at Frankfurt. That is approximately ten American dollars. Lufthansa, the German airline, 555 Fifth Avenue, New York city, will gladly send you travel costs, as will also travel agents.

Those giving serious thought to sharing in this great revival of the church in modern times will do well to have their registrations validated by July 1. One month later I plan to be in Frankfurt, doing my bit to help interpret the seventh Kirchentag to foreign guests.

A University Sermon from Scotland

The Optimism Of Grace

By Charles W. Ranson

In this hope we are saved. Romans 8:24.

A FEW years ago the *Literary Supplement* of the London *Times* produced a special number on "The Mind of 1951." A variety of writers surveyed contemporary literature and drama, music and painting, philosophy and politics, science and theology, and sought to draw conclusions as to the state of mind of that elusive specimen, modern man. Finally, a leader-writer summed it all up; and his main conclusion was contained in one sentence, which read: "Despair is the residuary emotion of our time." It is, perhaps, well that we should view such sweeping assertions as this with caution, even when they are supported by an array of erudition.

Nevertheless, it is true that we live at a moment of grave uncertainty in human affairs, and our contemporary mood is undoubtedly colored by that fact. It is not easy to look out upon the future with confidence and hope.

This general uncertainty was vividly reflected in a speech which Sir Winston Churchill made in the House of Commons shortly before he gave up the office of prime minister. He spoke of the way in which the entire foundation of human affairs has been revolutionized by the hideous power which science has placed in the hands of men. Mankind, he said, has been placed in a situation both measureless and laden with doom. Then he went on to ask: "What ought we to do? Which way shall we turn to save our lives and the future of the world? It does not matter so much for old people. They are going soon away. But I find it poignant to look at youth in all its activities and ardor, and most of all to watch little children playing their merry games, and wonder what would lie before them if God wearied of mankind."

"If God wearied of mankind." The good news which we have received in Jesus Christ and are sent to declare unto the world is that the patient love of God does *not* weary of mankind. And that is why we dare to hope. The Christian is called to live in the optimism of grace.

The saving hope, of which St. Paul speaks, is not a form of pious autosuggestion. It does not bid us believe that there is nothing to fear, nor that, if there is, it will go away if we do not look at it. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." It is within this context of a cosmos caught up in pain and travail that the apostle makes the affirmation that we are saved by hope.

The Christian hope is thus rooted, not in a vapid piety which says with closed eyes, "God's in His heaven/All's right with the world," but in the mighty drama of God's acts in creation and redemption, and in his sovereign purpose that all things in heaven and earth shall find their fulfillment and consummation in Jesus Christ.

What God Has Done

The optimism of grace rests on what God *has done;* on what God *will do;* and on what God *is doing* in the here and now.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." The faith by which the Christian church has lived, from its beginning —and by which it still lives—is that, in Jesus Christ, God became man. This is the supreme proof that God does not weary of mankind. He took our human flesh. He lived our life, here on this earth, our habitation. The man Christ Jesus lived the kind of life that God meant all men to live. He died, and in his death he bore the intolerable burden of human failure, frustration and evil. Behold and see if there be any sorrow like his sorrow. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. Yet from that tree he reigns. For by his death and resurrection he fought and won the decisive battle. He triumphed over the worst that the blindness and sin of men can do. An eminent Swiss theologian has made the luminous point that there is often a long interval between a decisive battle and final victory. D-day is usually separated from V-day by a period in which hard and bloody battle continues. The decisive battle with evil was fought and won in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The war goes on, and final victory is not yet, but we fight on in the knowledge that ultimate victory is secure because Jesus Christ has lived and died and risen again. By that hope, which is rooted in what God has already done, we are saved.

What God Will Yet Do

What is the nature of our hope for the future? I have on my shelves a book which was written forty years ago by a theologian with an international reputation. It bears the title *The Christian Hope.* I took it down and reread it recently. I found that it deals with Christian hope almost exclusively in terms of personal immortality. Is this then the one

distinctive element in Christian hope, that we are able to say with confidence that if a man die, he shall live again? It is a very precious thing that Christ still meets us with his assurance: "Because I live, you will live also." St. Paul writes, in the first letter to the Corinthians, of this blessed personal hope. He mingles theological argument with lyrical poetry and ends with an exultant shout: "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? . . . But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is an essential part of our Christian hope. We are offered in the gospel an assurance which we all crave as we face the inescapable fact of death, for those whom we love no less than for ourselves. But to interpret the hope of the gospel solely in these personal terms is to miss its true grandeur and fullness. The hope of which St. Paul writes in Romans 8 is a hope for the whole creation. Here and elsewhere he looks toward a mighty consummation in which God's final victory will be manifest. Time moves to a terminus. History is not an endless spiral. It has an end. And it is characteristic of Christian faith that this is seen and interpreted both in cosmic and in personal terms. We repeat in the words of the Nicene Creed: "He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead. Whose kingdom shall have no end." We do not know *what* is coming to the world. But we know *who* is coming. It is he who came and lived and died and rose again; who is with us here today and who will meet us at the end. That is the joyous hope in which the Christian lives. This saving hope, in its New Testament meaning, is bound up not only with what God has done—once for all—in Jesus Christ, but in what God will do.

What God Is Doing Now

There is, however, a third element in Christian hope. It is rooted in what God is doing now. What, then, is God doing? The answer is that he is gathering unto himself a people, a community which knows no barriers of class or race or nation—a church which is the nucleus of a new humanity. God has never wearied of mankind, despite its follies and futilities, its stubbornness and sin. His sovereign purpose has not been defeated. He is at work in the world. If we ask, What is the meaning of the present time? there is only one certain Christian answer. It is the time given to the church to fulfill the command to preach the gospel to every creature. When, after his death and resurrection, the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" his reply was, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power . . . and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." That was the commission given first to the church. That is the task for which it still exists—to preach the good news to the ends of the earth and to the end of time.

It is given to us to live in a time when the church has spread into almost every land. Through the missionary fidelity of many men and women the gospel has been carried to the ends of the earth. By the power of the Holy Spirit a great world-wide community has been gathered. And *that*, as Archbishop Temple once said, is the great new fact of our time. We should not, however, cherish romantic illusions about the world-wide church. It is sobering to remind ourselves of certain facts. It is estimated, for example, that one-third of the population of the world has not yet heard of Jesus Christ. Where the church has taken root in the great non-Christian cultures of Asia, it is still only a tiny minority confronted by the massive strength of resurgent non-Christian faith. Yet the church exists as a supranational fellowship; and the church endures and grows, though empires rise and wane.

Fifty years ago, the British raj in India was at the height of its power and glory. In the year 1903, Lord Curzon was viceroy of India. He organized an immense durbar in Delhi, to celebrate the recent accession of Edward VII. Curzon was a man of great ability, with an immense capacity for attention to detail. He exercised this latter gift in close supervision of every aspect of the preparations for the durbar. A Christian service was planned; and Curzon called, in advance, for a copy of the Order of Service. He found that one of the hymns proposed was "*Onward Christian Soldiers*," and forthwith placed a vice-regal veto on it. He did not do so for the quite plausible reason that most of the soldiers on view at the durbar would be Muslims and Hindus, but on the more Curzonian ground that the hymn contained the lines:

> Crowns and thrones may perish,
> Kingdoms rise and wane.

Lord Curzon could not, apparently, envisage a state of affairs in which the crown which he represented and the empire which he served with such distinction could possibly wane. Yet within less than fifty years the Indian Empire has given place to a sovereign republic.

You may recall the next two lines of Baring-Gould's well-known hymn:

> But the church of Jesus
> Constant will remain.

The church of Jesus remains in India. It spreads and grows; and in the matter of Christian unity continues to quicken the thought and conscience of the older Christendom.

Witnesses to the Saving Hope

God is at work in the world, and in this fact is one ground of our Christian hope. It is the element in the saving hope which gives meaning and direction to our daily lives. For God calls us to be fellow workers with him.

Christian hope is not a passive virtue. It demands of us both faith and love. Nor is it abstract and impersonal. Christ himself is our hope. He calls us to follow him; and those who make the venture of obedience find in him their Savior and their Hope.

More than a hundred years ago, when the great Thomas Chalmers was teaching and preaching in this university, there was an undergraduate who

(Continued on page 29)

The Word of Our God Will Stand For Ever

By John O. Mellin

The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.
Isaiah 40:8.

THIS is the Easter message in a verse. These beautiful flowers are not a symbol of eternal life but rather of temporal decay. "The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever." The Word of our God will stand. Nothing else does. Christian faith in a sentence is that Jesus Christ was the Word of God made flesh. *He* will stand for ever. This is the meaning for Easter. To those acquainted with Christian meanings, it may seem a bit odd to have an Old Testament text for Easter Sunday. It merely shows how the Old and New Testaments are one in their revelation of God. The flower fades, but the Word of our God does not. That Word is Jesus Christ.

The Practical Meaning

What is the practical meaning in this, for we always want the practical? It is this: unless you and I are related to something more lasting and more eternal than a geranium or an azalea, unless truth goes beyond your selfish desire and mine, there is no hope. The logic of hope is that Jesus, the Christ, is not dead. If this faith does not fit into the categories of the 20th century, it may mean that the categories of our century are not big enough to include anything but television, atomic bombs, gambling, sin and death. The church stands for the fact that eternal life is as real as temporal decay. There is no hedging. Christ lives.

Proof of the faith? It cannot be proved, else it would not be faith. Evidences of the faith can be given, however. The fact of the church is evidence of that faith. We worship no dead carpenter. Public worship last Sunday and public worship next Sunday are evidences of the resurrection faith. This gathering this morning is merely symbolic of an inarticulate desire on the part of many. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever.

We are thinking in terms of life, this morning, and we cannot think in such terms unless we think in terms of its opposite—death. Some say that the Christian faith is unrealistic. This is downright silly. It is realistic enough to realize that you cannot separate Good Friday from Easter. Death is real. Not only real, but also ultimate and final, if Easter is not true. If the Word of God, which means his will, his character, and personality, is defeated, wiped out forever by the conniving and sinfulness of men whatever the century, then there is no hope. If Christ, the Word of God, be dead, then we are all living in a temporary shelter, a fool's paradise. Evil in our day is rampant on a world-wide, national, city and personal level. It always has been. We know this, for we know our own hearts. If God was defeated in his purpose and his righteousness on that first Good Friday, then there is no hope. But we do have hope. The empty cross is the true symbol of Easter, and not the flowers, new suits and hats.

Easter is not a time of meaningless phrases and beautiful symbols. It is a time which speaks truth for life. It speaks of the fact that we really live in two worlds all the time. Those who say glibly, "One world at a time," don't know what they are talking about. Only a cow lives in one world at a time. A cow dies, but Dr. J. S. Whale points out with real insight that a man *has* to die. And there is a difference! It shows that a man is above a cow's world already, that he can contemplate his own end, his own being, his very existence. He can ask, "Why?" about life, and an animal does not. He can seek out life's meaning and find it through God's eternal purposes as revealed through Jesus Christ. He can ask himself whether he is part of that purpose, of that eternal life, if you will. And he also knows that unless Christ lives, the whole question is meaningless.

Two Worlds at a Time

A man has to die! And there is no real tragedy in it except that he has no time to get done what he ought. A cow is never anxious lest it not have time enough to "fulfill" itself. Human beings are anxious, for they know they live in two worlds at a time, and have made their adjustment on only one level, which is no adjustment at all.

Recently while reading Dr. George Buttrick's *So We Believe—So We Pray*, I was reminded of a display I saw during my senior year in the seminary. The book store there cut out a series of advertisements from the March issues of our popular magazines. There was one theme: namely, that Easter could not possibly be joyous unless a man bought a certain certified ham for dinner, unless the table were set with a certain sterling silver, unless madame had a genuine fur. Only one piece of copy

mentioned the Passion and the Messiah. The suggestion there was that it could be appreciated only over a Victor phonograph. A man *has* to die. His tragedy is that he has made adjustment to only one of his two worlds—the world of sin and death, of certified hams and furs. Hence his anxiety.

Underneath this commercial display, the book store had placed an open Bible with the resurrection account. It wasn't an escape story in the realm of bunny rabbits or Easter eggs. It was a realistic account of how real death is unless it is overcome by eternal living which rises above it. It was this eternal life that Jesus brought to light; and because all the darkness in the world could not put out that light, we have our hope. The choice is open to live in the shadows of one world or the brightness of two. And the choice is open now. Eternity is the present, which is always with us. Physical death is merely a milestone on the road of life.

Eternal Life

The great confusion of the modern world is that it thinks of its salvation only in terms of *time*. "Give me time," is a popular excuse. "Enjoy yourself, it's later than you think," is a popular song. We speak of being "older and wiser," but this more often reflects a pious hope than an accepted fact. We want *time* to fix things up—our relations with Russia, our relations with husband or wife, our relations with family, our relations with ourselves. But *time* is not the answer. We do not get better *by degrees*. Read your history books. In World War II we killed more people than did the barbarians who overran Europe in the 5th century. Our public and private citizens today are no more honest than those in the Roman Empire. Time improves only one world, the world of things. We may have better certified hams and better record players, but we haven't better people. "Give me time," is the excuse. The answer is that we have all the *time* in the world—and the answer is damning rather than saving, for we know that all the time in the world is not enough.

And so the poets speak of immortality. But immortality is merely more time, and time is not the answer. Someone has pointed out that in India the everlasting quality of life is a punishment. It is something from which to escape. The damned are destined to successive reincarnations until they can make their way out of them. Immortality and life everlasting became a blessing only after there arrived one who revealed a quality of life worth saving, even Jesus Christ our Lord. And he called it life eternal. He made it available to all.

A New Dimension

The treasure of God's Kingdom has been known to men of this world ever since. It not only makes sense out of eternity, but also makes sense out of today. In the light of Christ, eternity is given meaning, for it is redeemed from a mere duration of fretting and tears, and pronounced to be where God's love forever reigns. In the light of Christ, *today* makes sense, for the warm glow of God's love shines through the clouds of this life in him. This has always been the faith of the church. Its saints have found in the love and fellowship of God a life that even death cannot take away. Indeed, Christ has taken away death's sting, revealing it to be merely a halfway station on the road of eternal life which can be discovered any morning or afternoon.

This was what was opened up to the first disciples. Something new had been revealed to them that the worst efforts of the Roman guard and their own unfaithfulness could not destroy. With the faith that they now lived in a new dimension of life—not of time but of kind—they set forth to bring this gospel to all men. The core of that message was that we are saved not by having another day, but rather because of God's forgiving love. This new atmosphere of love which reaches beyond the grave was made possible through the Christ who lives—Christ, the Word of God.

●

O Thou who makest the stars and turnest the shadows of death into bright morning, on this day of days we render unto Thee our Lord and King the tribute of our praise; for the everlasting hopes that rise within the human heart, and for the gospel which hath brought life and immortality to light. Receive our thanksgiving, reveal Thy presence, and bring to our hearts the spirit of the risen Lord, we pray. Amen.

This Is the Day Which the Lord Hath Made

By Siegmund A. E. Betz

FEW sorts of flowers by this altar placed
Bloomed in that garden where the Lord arose.
Surely no cloth we have devised and traced
In leaded glass or folded marble shows
What radiances and textures flower from Him.
We dream and fashion these about the core
Of the event; we burnish cherubim
And set with market-jewels pure heaven's door.
The wonder none can tell but all must speak—
This too we must appropriate and view
In our day's monstrance. There the bright unique
Moment of His arising shines anew,
Transforming time, setting its count aside,
Making all seasons Resurrectiontide.

The Day of the Earthquake

By Roy M. Pearson

Matthew 28:1-9.

IT was in the spring of the year that it happened. As in the Song of Solomon, it was in the days when

> . . . the winter is past;
> the rain is over and gone.
> The flowers appear on the earth,
> the time of singing has come,
> and the voice of the turtledove
> is heard in our land.

It was in the spring of the year that it happened, and the world lay hushed and still as the curtain was raised for the greatest drama earth has ever known.

"*After the Sabbath . . .*" That was how the ancient author opened his story. The Sabbath was the last day of the week. This was the day on which God had rested from his labors in creation, and as the people of the land observed it, the holy hours ran from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. But now the Sabbath was over. Now the sacred day was done.

Yet it was more than a day that was ended in that year of which this story tells. It was an institution, an era, an age. All history would henceforth fall apart at this point, and one half of time would lie behind it and the other half would lie ahead. Of course, there was no man on earth who knew that anything unusual had happened as that Sabbath hurried down the fading corridors of the days that are gone, but already the scene on God's stage had been shifted, and the former things were passed away. The end of the Sabbath? Yes, but far more important than that: the end of an epoch, the end of an eon, the end of a world.

A New Day Draws Near

"After the Sabbath, *toward the dawn of the first day of the week . . .*" The story begins in darkness. If you thought of nothing but the calendar, the Sabbath was over, and the night was gone. The morning had actually come—but not the dawn. Not quite yet. It was perhaps three o'clock on Sunday, and the birds were still asleep in their nests, and the stars were still a pale white in the sky. Black was still earth's color in the land of Palestine, and for the saddened hearts of men the blue and gold of hope were hues of memory but not of expectation.

Yet, all unknown, earth's face was not turned toward the darkness, and just below the eastern hills the chariots of God were speeding toward the dawn. The first day of the week was ready for the earth, and the dawn of that day was like the end of the Sabbath. It was not really a day at all: it was an age, an epoch, a world. And when those hours were over, earth would never be the same again.

But now the action begins, for "After the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, *Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre.*" The first people on the stage are two women. The first people on the stage are trespassers —people who had no right to be there in the garden at all, people who might have been seized if discovered, people who chose the dawn for their visit in the hope of slipping in and out before the city woke from sleep. The first people on the stage are the curious. They did not come to do anything; for there was nothing anyone could do. They did not come to meet the risen Lord; for they did not know that he had risen. They came "to see the sepulchre," to etch upon their memories the place where their Master was buried, and to stand a moment there before this monument to the crucifixion of their hopes and dreams.

Promise of Things to Come

"*And, behold, there was a great earthquake.*" Silence, and then uproar. Order, and then tumult. Solitude, and then the awareness of life all around you. Here was the schoolteacher suddenly rapping on her desk for attention. Here was the ship's loudspeaker abruptly blaring into sound with the voice that commands, "Now hear this—." It was as if you were lying asleep in your bed at night, and a pistol were fired beside your ear. It was as if you had rowed your little boat up to a rocky ledge in the ocean and then the "ledge" had moved and you found that you had stepped upon a whale. It was as if God were shaking the earth to compel its awareness. "Wake up!" he was saying. "Wake up, and pay heed! The world is in travail, and a new day is about to be born. Wake up! Wake up!"

"Behold, there was a great earthquake," and what better words could you find to be the prophecy of what was to happen to the world because of that day? This man whose body had been laid in the tomb, as Phillip Schaff wrote,

> without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, he shed more light on things human and divine than all the philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of the school, he spoke words

of life such as were never spoken before, nor since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, he has set more pens in motion and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, works of art, learned volumes, and sweet songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.

An earthquake indeed! An earthquake God-commanded. An earthquake God-inspired.

God Took Over

"*For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it.*" That was what earth always seemed to be doing —putting stones on the pathways of progress, blocking the highroads of redemption, laying man's hopes in a tomb and then sealing the doors against their escape. But now earth had been the ruler long enough. Earth had said enough and done enough. Now it was God's turn, and now God was taking over. So "an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone." If man could not see what lay behind that stone. God could; and if man would not open the tomb, God would do it himself. Moreover, he would keep it open; for when the angel rolled back the stone from the door, he "sat upon it." There it was, and there it would stay. Christ was loose in the world again, and he would never return to the tomb. This was not a temporary respite from evil. This was the ultimate victory. This was the final conquest.

But looking upon the angel, the guards found that "*his appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became ill like dead men.*" And small wonder that they did! Nobody expected this to happen. Nobody was looking for an earthquake. Nobody thought an empty tomb was possible. A Galilean carpenter had made himself obnoxious. Rome had paid as little heed to him as possible, but when he kept annoying her officials, Rome had crucified him. That, Rome thought, was that; and so in fact thought everybody else. But now it looked as if Rome had been wrong. It looked as if God was on the side of the man whom Rome had crucified; and if this was true, the world was different than they had always assumed. Loving enemies, doing good to those who hate you, turning the other cheek, walking the second mile, bearing your own cross—this was the substance of the Galilean's preaching, and if God upheld that point of view, it was not strange that guards should shake and keepers tremble. The old foundations of their self-assurance were being pulled away from their feet; they had nothing on which to stand; and they "became like dead men."

No Longer There

"*But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.'*" Is there no significance in the fact that the angel's words were not addressed to the guards but to the women? The keepers had good reason for their fears: their world was crashing down around their heads. But not so with the women: their world was finding new foundations, and their world was being lighted with a fresh, new proof of permanence.

The crucified Christ was not in the tomb. "He is not here," the angel had told them. "He is not here; for he has risen, as he said." And down the halls of time that confidence has lifted up the fainting hearts of men until in the days of the World War II Margaret Slattery could write those words of haunting beauty:

> There are graves in the lonely sands of Africa where a brother who died bravely was buried; a dear beloved friend; a boy who won at tennis and swam across the lake with strong steady strokes a few short months ago. They were buried where they fell and the tide of battle roared on leaving a mound, a cross, a flag. Above such graves there is a voice saying, *He is not here.*
>
> In far-away Bataan they buried a nurse who had been good and gay and very daring; a doctor who with his last ounce of strength had ministered to those in pain; and a Filipino patriot, one of his country's finest sons. Over their graves a voice in the wind, a clear voice is saying, *Not here—not here—because I live—they live also.*

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had come to the garden "to see the sepulchre," and that was all they ever *would* see in that rocky tomb. They could see the place where the Lord lay, but the Lord himself was no longer there. He had risen as he said, and already that sequence of events had been initiated out of which would come the Christian faith, the Christian gospel, the Christian church. James S. Stewart has said that "not one line of the New Testament was written—not one sentence, whether of Gospels, Epistles, Acts or Apocalypse, was penned, apart from the conviction that he of whom these things were being written had conquered death and was alive forever." And in the events of this tremendous day that faith had taken root. Jesus Christ was not dead! Jesus Christ was alive!

Come See and Go Tell

But now turn back to the angel again. "Come, see the place where he lay," he had said. "*Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you into Galilee; there you will see him. Lo, I have told you.*" Come see—and go tell! The rocky tomb was not to be made a private chapel. There was to be no secret fellowship of those who, having been the witness of strange events, retained them for their own enjoyment only. Come see—and go tell! Already the faith was being turned into a gospel. The disciples must be informed. The disciples must be convinced. And as the risen Lord moved outward into endless Galilees beyond the borders of Jerusalem, the ones who loved him must go with him. The resurrection was not the final chapter in the book of God's greatest purpose: it was only the first, and although the disciples must be told at once, already preparations must also be made for something reaching far beyond them. It was in the northern fishing villages that they would find their next assignment. It was in their homes, with their friends, at their work, among the men who hated

them. And so having come, they were quickly to go; and having gone, they had the promise that they would behold once more the one whom they had never thought to see again.

"*So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.*" They ran with great joy because they had been told that their Lord was still alive, but they ran with fear because they could not help but wonder if the word were really true. They ran with fear because they knew what Rome had done at Golgotha and still could do to those she hated, but they ran with great joy because if Christ had risen from the dead, it did not matter any more what Rome might do to them. But whether with fear or with great joy, they *ran*. That was all that really mattered. Their doubts, their uncertainties, their weaknesses, their imperfections—all these they put behind them. They did as they were told. They started to preach the gospel of the risen Lord. They ran to bring his disciples word.

More Alive Than Ever

"*And behold,*" as they ran to tell his disciples, "*Jesus met them and said, 'Hail!' And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.*" It was as simple as that. They obeyed, and they found. They believed, and they were confirmed in their belief. They ran to tell, and they themselves were told. Many years later Samuel H. Miller would say that "one must practice the doing of things even before one knows how to do them. . . . We have to cook before we know how to cook. We have to hammer and saw, clumsily and with grotesque results, before we can become a carpenter. We have to stumble and fall if we are to walk. The only way in which we can grow into something better than we are now is to do things we are not strictly able to do." That was what happened in the women at the tomb. They preached before they knew how to preach. They taught before they knew that they could teach. They proclaimed the faith which they had before they possessed the faith which they wished that they had. When they did, "Jesus met them," and over and over again the experience of the women has been sustained in the hearts of those who followed their example. The risen Christ did not appear to Pilate. He did not come to Caiaphas. He was not demonstrated to the multitude which had demanded that Rome should crucify him. He came to the women who had loved him. He came to the disciples who had followed him. He came to the people who had trusted him. And when they saw him, they "took hold of his feet and worshiped him"; for now death had lost its sting and the grave had been robbed of its victory, peace had passed their understanding and life had overcome the world.

After John Brown had been hanged, Thoreau remarked of him, "I meet him at every turn. He is more alive than ever he was." So, too, it is with Christ today. On highway and byway, in factory and marketplace, in home and school, and in the hearts of people one by one—there still we meet him in our crowded days. We meet him in blessing, or we meet him in judgment. But we cannot get away from him. For "lo," he said, "I am with you always, to the close of the age."

An Easter Prayer

By Herbert Beecher Hudnut

Woodward Avenue Presbyterian, Detroit

O GOD who hast brought us to this holy morning, when we renew the memory of our Redeemer's passion and resurrection, fill our hearts with the same adoration and rejoicing that the disciples experienced on the first Easter morning. Let nothing disturb the beauty and the glory of this day; keep our vision clear, our insight true, our communion with Thee pure and lovely.

Wherever there is suffering and pain, we pray that it may be relieved, especially for these whom we name silently now . . .

Wherever there are those carrying heavy crosses, we pray that there may be those like Simon of Cyrene to help them with their burdens; wherever there are children neglected and dependent, may they find helpers to give them new homes and a fresh chance at normal living; wherever there are people who are lonely and forsaken, may they be revived by steadfast friends and renewed by Thy good Spirit; wherever there is hatred and tension and the beating of war drums, we pray that Thy servants, the peacemakers, may be guided in their efforts to create understanding and good will.

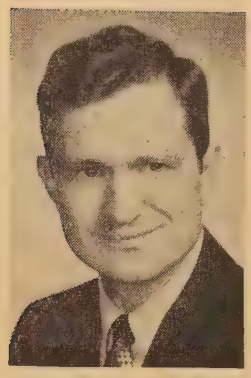
Our prayers are offered for the President of these United States, for the Congress, for representatives at the United Nations and in foreign lands, and for all in authority in state and county and city. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning and pure manners.

Make Thy church fit for the indwelling of Thy Holy Spirit, grounding us in faith, building us in hope and perfecting us in charity.

And may Thy peace fill our hearts and minds when we are at home, at work, at worship and at play.

Our prayer is offered in the name of the risen Christ. Amen.

outhern Pastor Counsels
People in Their . . .



Days of Decision

By Robert Paul Sessions

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus . . . Colossians 3:17.

N the morning of January 18, 1956, Judge John E. Miller of the United States District rt ordered our local school board to present to court, by August 15 of this year, "concrete s" for racial integration of the Van Buren ol district. Perhaps for the first time our state community began to feel the full impact of t the south has come to call *the* Supreme Court sion.

he controversy in our courts, however, is but a lic reflection of a personal dilemma which every herner faces today. In the words of a colloqui- n from my boyhood, we are "caught between a and a hard place."

Deep-Rooted Traditions

n the one hand, we have been taught from the le that segregation belongs in the south like l chicken or corn bread. Sincere men and nen, Christian in many respects, have believed persons of different races were not intended to x," socially or otherwise. The Negro has been gned a fixed place in our community structure, it has been taken for granted that he should , as we put it, "in his place." For decades, er the "separate but equal facilities" doctrine, law of our land has permitted, or even sanc- led, our southern social system. Segregation has a part of our way of life, in housing, public bols, employment, social groups, even in our rches. The presence and pressure of these deep- ed traditions is felt by every southerner.

n the other hand, each of us has become aware, easingly in the last few years, of another point iew. The big jolt came when the United States reme Court began telling us that compulsory egation because of race—on interstate trains buses, in public schools or parks—is illegal, onstitutional, and therefore un-American so far he Constitution embodies our American ideals. even before the Supreme Court decisions, our rches already were saying to us that all men are hers in Christ, and that racial discrimination is only un-American but un-Christian as well. ng statements to that effect have been issued responsible bodies of virtually every major istian denomination—Roman Catholic, South- Baptist, Presbyterian, Disciples, Methodist and others. We have been charged by the State partment with hurting American diplomatic re- ons abroad, and by our churches with embar- rassing missionary activities among the non-white peoples of the world. We have been told that our treatment of the Negro is not in keeping with the spirit of Christ, whom we love and serve. And if we are honest with ourselves, we admit that these accusations from without are matched by uneasy stirrings of conscience within.

So we are torn between two conflicting loyalties. The basic conflicts are not between Negro and white, north and south, federal court and local school board, but between our own conditioned emotions and our educated minds, our traditions and our ideals, our cherished customs and our Christian convictions. To be sure, there are public and social problems which must be faced and solved, but the underlying dilemma is intensely personal. The important battle is being fought, not in the courtrooms of our land, but in the hearts and minds of individual citizens like you and me. It is here, within ourselves, that the crucial decisions are being made. It is here that the final solution will be found.

Four Guiding Principles

These are days of decision, for the south in general and for individual southerners in particular. I would like to suggest four important principles which ought to guide us as each of us seeks to determine what his own attitudes and actions shall be.

In the first place, as Americans and Christians, we will never demand that any other person shall believe exactly as we do, but rather we will expect, and respect, differences of opinion. Here in our own church, for example, you would think less of me as your minister should I compromise my own convictions to fit those of the congregation, and fail to preach according to the dictates of my own conscience on this or any other subject. As intelligent members of the church, you know that when the pulpit becomes merely an echo of the pew, the preacher becomes a parrot and religion sinks to mockery.

We need this same freedom of conscience in every walk of life, especially during these critical days of racial tension. At parties or P.-T.A. meetings, at civic clubs and across backyard fences, we owe to every other person the freedom of belief and expression which we desire for ourselves. A few days ago a lay member of another church in our town said to me, "Bob, when I was a boy I attended school with students of several races, including Orientals

and Negroes, and I have thanked God many times for that enriching experience." Then he added, "But I don't say that publicly here in Van Buren, because I'd lose some of my customers if I did." As I pondered his statement, I thought of words from our national anthem: "Land of the free and home of the brave." Shall we be neither free nor brave? Or shall we preserve our liberties by agreeing to let each other disagree, giving to some the right to be wrong, that others may have the right to be right? When our differences require public settlement we have the courts, often imperfect but still our best guarantee of justice for all. And when our differences are personal in nature, as most of them will be, we have a brotherhood in Christ which ought to permit us to disagree without being disagreeable. Some of the most heated arguments I've ever had have been with my own brother, but through them all we have loved each other as brothers should. So let us in these days of decision covet for each other the right to differ, in love, as brothers in Christ.

Devotion to Law and Order

A second guiding principle in times like these should be an intelligent devotion to law and order, to the things that make for peace rather than strife. It might seem incongruous for a Christian minister to have to ask his church members to obey the law, and there is more involved here than that alone. I would have us use our influence as Christians so that the solution to our own community's problem may be worked out in a Christian manner. The members of our school board, administrative officials, teachers, students and parents—all will need the prayers and thoughtful concern of each other and of every conscientious citizen if the present controversy is to be resolved honorably and sensibly.

I am confident that, as far as our own townspeople are concerned, an orderly and reasonable plan can be worked out for our public schools. But there is a very real danger that trouble may come from organized hate groups in other parts of the state and nation. Some of these groups will stop at nothing, short of violating the law themselves, to stir up racial bitterness and even violence. Already some of their literature is coming to our school officials, and it may be that they will have agitators here when our school board does begin to put the court's ruling into effect. If they come, most of us will know their real purpose—not to help our town but to stir up strife here as a deterrent to integration in their own communities. We will know, too, that some of them are pandering to the hatreds and prejudices of our people to further their own political ambitions. Already our state papers have speculated that a leader of the so-called White Citizens Councils would like to ride a wave of race prejudice right into the governor's mansion in Little Rock. We will not be fooled by rabble-rousers or political opportunists who for their own selfish purposes try to stir up discord among our people. We know that the alternative to law and order is lawlessness and disorder, and that the opposites of peace and love are strife and hatred. As followers of the Prince Peace we will work for peaceful solutions within laws of our land.

This interest by outside groups spotlights a th significant aspect of our local situation—that w we think of as *our* problem really belongs to mankind. It is ours to solve under the law, but solution we reach and the manner we choose reach it will affect every man alive and many unborn.

The World Is Watching

Part of this truth is obvious, though nonethel important. Since our school system likely will the first in Arkansas to begin integration involu tarily under orders of a federal court, our respo as citizens will be watched by every other co munity in the state. We might well ask ourselv "What kind of example shall we set—one of bitt ness, intolerance and injustice, or of patience, c sideration and fair play?"

The course we choose will influence our state a the southland, and the effect will be felt in eve part of the globe. Racial equality and human rig are explosive issues in a world which cannot affo to explode—a world in which three-fourths of t people are non-white. The Communist mastermin of the cold war are telling hundreds of millions China, India and Africa that white Americans lo down on non-whites as inferiors, unworthy brotherhood or comradeship. Every denial of h man rights in Mississippi (or in Arkansas), eve expression of racial snobbery in Georgia (or in A kansas), is potent ammunition for Commun propaganda guns. It is no exaggeration to say th the world is watching every action and heari every word of every southerner in this time of rac adjustment. Let us ponder well what we would ha our community say to the world.

There is still another dimension in which wh we consider a local crisis affects men everywhe Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as "T Race Problem," for race in itself is no proble among men of good will. The underlying problem *prejudice*, and prejudice is not confined to consi erations of skin color. Labor and managemen Democrats and Republicans, rich and poor, ed cated and illiterate, young and old, cultured an uncouth—each and all may be guilty of warpe attitudes and biased actions. Some of the mo subtle and venomous prejudices can be those amon members of a family, or among differing denomin tions of the Christian family. The struggle again racial intolerance in our southern states is be understood as a part of Brotherhood's univers war with intolerance in every walk of life.

Opportunity Beckons

This truth points up a final fundamental prin ciple which ought to guide us in our present days decision—the recognition that what we call ou "problem" actually may be our *opportunity*. Ever experience in life that tests our faith can be an oc casion for witnessing to our convictions, and fo

(Continued on page 24)

A Sermon Condensation

Resurrection Today

By Ben F. Lehmberg

THE living Christ brings with him resurrection. What does "resurrection" mean? My dictionary gives this as one definition: "A resumption of vigor; restoration; revival." If the fact of the resurrection of Christ can bring that kind of resurrection to humanity—can bring a resumption of vigor, restoration, revival to us—then this can be the greatest blessing of our lives.

Humanity needs a resurrection of courage. Roy L. Smith says it is significant that nowhere in the New Testament is there any promise to the cynic and the coward. The reassurances which Jesus gave were to men who had courage, who faced danger with determination.

Picture that company of disciples—the men who had followed Jesus. They had turned their backs on their professions, their townspeople, their friends, even on their families, to follow Jesus. Now he was dead, and with his death died everything they had dreamed of.

Before and After

Suddenly something happened. Three days after their leader was crucified and buried, these same men—frightened, discouraged, just a few hours earlier—were going about saying: "He is risen; he is not dead; he is alive." And you find them facing his enemies and saying to them: "You thought you could put him to death. But the cross and the tomb couldn't hold him. He is not dead. He is alive." Cowards before, they became men of unusual courage.

Some years ago a famous children's hospital published a picture booklet. A photograph had been made of each crippled child, as he came in, and again after he was cured. The illustrations in the book were captioned "Before and After." When you picture the disciples in Jerusalem nineteen centuries ago, Good Friday is the "before"; Easter Sunday is the "after." A group of spiritual cripples on Friday, they were walking about on their own two feet on Easter Sunday.

Humanity needs a resurrection of truth, too. It was falsehood which betrayed Jesus. Falsehoods convicted him and sent him to the cross. But with his resurrection truth experienced a resurrection. Yet falsehood continues its attempts to crucify the truth.

It was falsehood that burned Bruno, that compelled Socrates to drink poison, humiliated Copernicus, put John Bunyan behind prison walls. But in prison there was a resurrection of truth as Bunyan wrote his immortal *Pilgrim's Progress*. Truth flew out of that prison and gave humanity a new vision.

Men thought they could destroy what Wycliff stood for, but as Fox once wrote, "though they digged up Wycliff's body, burned his bones and drowned his ashes, yet the word of God and truth of his doctrine, with the truth and success thereof, they could not burn; which yet to this day for the most part do remain."

Thomas Fuller wrote of Wycliff: "The brook did convey his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas; they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliff are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over."

Renewed Hope

Wordsworth, taking up the thought of Fox and Fuller, wrote:

> As thou these ashes, little Brook, wilt bear
> Into Avon, Avon to the tide
> Of Severn, Severn to the narrow seas,
> Into main ocean they, this deed accurst
> An emblem yields to friends and enemies,
> How the bold Teacher's Doctrine, sanctified
> By truth, shall spread throughout the world dispersed.

Falsehood is ever crucifying truth, but for truth there is always a resurrection day. It can't be kept buried.

Humanity also needs a resurrection of hope. Easter restores our hope.

It might be well for us to listen to the words of Heywood Broun, who some time before his death criticized the church for its timidity in speaking on the subject of immortality. He said he had noticed the topics announced by ministers for their Easter sermons, and he was not satisfied to hear beautiful nothings about the springtime of the soul and the renewal of life. He longed to hear ministers express, without any question of a doubt, the affirmative answer to the question: "If a man dies, shall he live again?"

Rufus Choate was one of England's able statesmen. When his health broke he decided to go to a resort on the continent. As he stepped on board ship a friend said to him, "Well Rufus, you'll still be here a year from now; even ten years from now." At that the statesman replied, "Sir, I shall be here a hundred years from now, a thousand years from now." His biography tells us that he did not get off the ship alive, but died on the journey. Faith tells us that he was right—he was still alive. "Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

Mary Magdalene

By Alvin J. Beachy

IT is fitting that Mary Magdalene should be the heroine of the resurrection morning. Christian tradition has identified her as that nameless woman who came uninvited to the house of Simon, the Pharisee, when Jesus was a guest there. This woman brought an alabaster box of ointment, wet the feet of Jesus with her tears and then dried them with her hair. Simon looked on and thought to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner" (Luke 7:39b). Jesus did not identify this woman at all, save as one who loved much because she had been forgiven much.

One cannot say that the tradition that Mary Magdalene was this woman is supported by the Scriptures. Whether or not it is historically true, the tradition represents a very great Christian truth which is recorded at the very beginning of John's Gospel. "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:11-13). The heart of the gospel is that the new life is offered freely to all. It is not the prerogative of those of noble birth nor high station in life. Man does not lift himself into the Kingdom of God by tugging at his own boot straps. He who would enter, however high on the social ladder, must do so by accepting the gift which God offers. He who would enter, however lowly, may do so by accepting the same gift of God's grace. We dare not set any limit to the transforming grace of God in Christ. To all who receive him he still gives power to become children of God. Mary Magdalene, appearing as she does in John's Gospel as the first witness of the resurrection, is the very incarnation of this sublime Christian truth: that the grace of God can take the most wretched of earth and transform them into messengers of hope and joy.

Character Sketch

We meet Mary Magdalene first in Luke 8 where she is named as one of a number of women who had been healed by Jesus of evil spirits and infirmities. She appears as a sensitive and deeply grateful woman whose gratitude took the practical form of doing something for Jesus in return. We do not meet her again until the time of the crucifixion and burial. In the first three Gospels her name appears first among the names of the wom who visited the tomb on the morning of the resu rection. John's Gospel reports her as first coming the tomb by herself and then returning for Pet and John after she had seen the tomb open ar surmised that it was empty.

The Gospels combine to give us a charact sketch of Mary Magdalene. She had been in som desperate condition, and she was restored to healt and wholeness by Jesus. In gratitude she followe him and helped to provide for him out of h means. She had the capacity for great affectio She stood by the cross during the crucifixion, an was the last to leave the tomb and the first t return to it on the morning of the resurrectio She became, whatever her origin, a very prominen member of the early Christian community. Whe ever she is named, in all four Gospels, her nam precedes even that of Mary, the mother of Jesus

If Mary Magdalene was rescued by Jesus fro a life of open shame, as ancient tradition says, w can understand the utter heartbreak that was her as she stood by the cross of the only true friend sh had ever had. Other men had roused passion in he to an unholy pitch. Jesus stilled the passion an lifted the whole of her life to that level of purit and goodness that comes when men and wome seek first the Kingdom.

We can understand, too, the devotion that too her to the grave of her truest friend at daybrea (some commentaries suggest as early as 3:00 a.m.) for here she would at least be near that loved form though the voice was still and those tender, com passionate eyes, which could also flash with indig nation, were closed. We can also understand the dismay that filled her heart when she saw the tomb open and surmised that it was empty. She hastened to inform Peter and John, who confirmed her report without apparently grasping its real significance, and then returned to their quarters. But Mary Magdalene could not leave. With that hope that is born of desperation she looked again into the tomb. But Peter and John had been right. The body was not there. She saw two angels, but she was not frightened by them because she was lost in grief and love.

Then the risen, glorified Lord spoke to her. Still she did not recognize him until he spoke a second time and called her by name. How often in days past as he won her to a new way of life had he spoken her name until his accent had become music

to her ears. Now again came that familiar name, "Mary," spoken as only one could speak it. And Mary answered in a flash of recognition, "Rabboni!" In that moment her deep sorrow was turned into eternal joy. He, who had rescued her from a fate worse than death, had indeed been slain by wicked men, but God had raised him up and brought him again from the dead. We wonder why Mary was forbidden to touch him when Thomas was commanded to do so, but we can well afford to leave that question in the secret councils of God and turn our attention to the great spiritual truths that we may learn from John's resurrection story.

Practical Lessons

The first truth to which we would call attention is that the love which shared the agony of the crucifixion, and stood by during the burial of the body and came to the tomb at early dawn, was the first to be granted a vision of the risen Lord. There is no record in the Scriptures that he ever appeared to those who did not love him or believe in him. Pontius Pilate and Annas and Caiaphas were not impressed by the accounts of the resurrection. Those to whom Easter means the most today are those who have been faithful to their Lord during the whole year. Folks who come to church only at Easter will, we hope, be inspired by the message of the resurrection to begin their spiritual pilgrimage anew. But those to whom the glorious message of the resurrection will come with greatest clarity are those who have been faithful all year.

The second practical lesson is that Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons, whom Christian tradition identified as the woman who was a sinner, became the first witness of the resurrection and the bearer of the good news to the scattered and disheartened disciples. Is not this a mark of the measureless grace and love of God, that a woman who had been a sinner should become the first witness of the resurrection and the first to tell the good news to others? Is not this the very fulfillment of what John wrote in the very beginning of the Gospel that bears his name: "To all who received him . . . he gave power to become the children of God"?

In the other Gospels the sequence of events is the same, though the command is spoken by angels rather than by our Lord himself. Come and see, then go and tell! The sequence is always thus. The news of the resurrection is too good to be kept to ourselves. It is made known to us that we may tell it again to others. The gift that gives one human being the power to become a child of God is open to anyone who will receive it and there are no limitations.

Mark of Measureless Grace

The third lesson we learn from John's resurrection story comes from the twofold message which the risen Lord told Mary Magdalene to carry to the scattered disciples. We find the first part of this message in the fact that Jesus calls the disciples his brethren. In the other Gospels the message of the angels to the women is to go tell his disciples. But there, too, when Jesus greets the women with "Hail," or as Moffat puts it, "Good morning," he changes the word "disciples" to "brethren." Again it is a mark of the measureless grace of God that they who had so recently forsaken him and fled should be greeted as brethren. No word of reproach, but an assurance of understanding love and forgiveness! We see here a glimpse of what the Gospels mean by eternal life. Mary recognized the risen Lord as one and continuous with Jesus of Nazareth. We may be sure that when we lay aside this mortal flesh we shall recognize our loved ones who have gone before. But far more wonderful—so glorious that we hesitate to make the statement or believe it, so daring is its sweep—is the thought that in the risen Christ we get a glimpse of what God had in mind for a redeemed humanity. Did he not say, "Go, tell my brethren"? Put that command alongside Paul's thought in Romans 8:29, that Christ is the firstborn among many brethren, and we begin to grasp its significance. It means that here is what we shall be when the struggle with sin and death is over and won by the gift of God's grace!

The second part of this twofold message which Mary was told to bring to the disciples is, if possible, more amazingly wonderful than the first. It was that he who was the God and Father of the risen Lord was also the God and Father of the scattered disciples. As John Mackay of Princeton says in his book *God's Order—The Ephesian Letter and This Present Time*, a world where God is Father is not an orphanage, and human history is more than dead values. Since the ultimate experimental pattern is that of a paternal kingdom, "might is not right . . . and souls are not for sale."

Sum of the Parts Equals the Whole

To sum up the whole matter then, evil men never have the last word in a universe where God, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, is God and Father of all who believe in him. There is a significant incident in Matthew's version of the resurrection story which illustrates this. At the request of the priests a great stone was rolled to the door of the tomb, and the stone was sealed with the imperial seal of Rome. This was supposed to be an insurmountable barrier to the human friends of Jesus, whom the priests feared might spirit his body away.

But Rome and the priests had not reckoned with that God who is also Father. Matthew says there was a great earthquake, and the angel of the Lord descended and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. What would have been for the human friends of Jesus an insurmountable barrier became for the heavenly visitor a place to rest after his task was completed. Puny men cannot finally defeat God, who has the power to bring the dead again to life. It was the conviction of St. Paul that the same power God manifested when he brought Christ again from the dead is even now at work in the hearts of believers. It is my conviction, too. I pray God that it may be yours as well.

(Continued on page 22)

History's Greatest Drama

By Fred Luchs

"It is finished." John 19:30.

JESUS died in disgrace. His own people (the Jews) planned his death. His ruling authorities (the Romans) carried out the foul deed. His closest friends (the disciples) deserted him. Write in capital letters across that life: FAILURE. Where were the palm-swaying crowds and the hymn-singing folk who a few days previous had given him great ovation? Where were the lepers he had cleansed, the blind he had given sight, the lame he had made to walk, and the depressed he had given hope? Where were the people who heard him gladly? Where were they?

In that awful moment of disgrace Jesus moaned, "It is finished." And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. His life telescoped before him as before a drowning man. Flashbacks of his life came to him.

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

Never again for it is finished.

And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

Never again for it is finished.

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Never again for it is finished.

Never again would he know the joy of preaching, the inspiration of teaching, or the satisfaction of healing. For it is finished.

The Curtain Rose

Do you know Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts?* This novel of English peasant life tells the story of a local-talent pageant staged on the lawn of one Mrs. Swithin. Here you see in the audience the rich and poor, the great and insignificant, the normal and not so normal people of the village. There's the butcher, the baker, the candlestickmaker, the barrister, wealthy dowager, minister, kitchen maid and the serving man.

As the pageant unfolds one sees English history roll across the stage—the Romans have come, Saxons arise, the Pilgrims sail, the Stuarts and Tudors and all the royalty of England have their exits and their entrances. And now Shakespeare writes about the common man, and the common folk sing about royalty! "The king is in his counting house . . ."

Throughout lines are muffed, cues are missed, properties are dropped, characters are overdrawn and the gramophone refuses to play. People keep muttering, "Well, the director did the best she could."

The pageant was not great drama but it was great history for it portrayed an England in defeat and victory. You see England through all its blunders and mistakes emerging into a great nation. And as the pageant takes root in you (the reader's life), you can only say, "England—a country of human and gigantic people." In your admiration you forget the pains of "No taxation without representation" or "Give me liberty or give me death" or "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for a people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another." You find yourself cheering for "jolly old England."

Actors Indicate Play Is Over

The pageant ends. What more could the writer say? Would she add a postlude? An epilogue? Anything would be anticlimactic. But she said three more words—words to set alongside "It is finished." The three words with which she ended the book were: "The Curtain Rose." The postlude became the prelude. The epilogue became the prologue.

Virginia Woolf in 1939 wanted to tell the English people that the pageant of England was not ended. They, themselves, were characters in the pageant. And now the curtain was rising upon the stage where they were the actors and now they determined the future of England.

The curtain rose. But the characters taking part in the drama of Good Friday thought the curtain had fallen, that their actions had tolled the bells. Witness their behavior indicating the play was over.

And when the centurion . . . saw that he thus breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was a son of God!"

And all the multitudes . . . when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts.

And when evening was come . . . Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive. 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore order the sepulchre to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first."

All these assumed that the play was over. But they were wrong. The curtain was just going up. It rose to reveal the greatest drama in history. All history prior to that curtain-rising was a prologue which read:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God . . .

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

They crucified him. And then the curtain rose. Now watch the drama.

A man comes back from the dead. He tells his followers, "Go into all the world . . . " This little sect goes into the world and miracles begin. The walls of paganism are pushed back. The terrible Huns are converted. Monasteries become seats of learning. The drama is intensified. Men try to contain the Word, but the Word pours out over the world. The Word receives new impetus. Slaves are freed, women are given rights, children are recognized as people. Another upsurge of the Word, and prophets cry: "Slums must go," "Bigotry must go." "Discrimination must go," "Injustice must go," "Child labor and industrial tyranny must go."

On Golgatha the curtain rose on the greatest drama in history. The curtain has not come down. You are in the wings. That's your cue. Go out on the stage. Act your part. And in God's name play the king, speak out bravely.

BE AN ANGEL

A Sermon for Children by the Rev. Lucille M. Worster

BOYS and girls, I am sure at one time or another your father or mother has said to you, "Be a dear and hand me my glasses which are there on the table," or, "Be a good Scout and help with the dishes."

This morning I too am going to ask you to be something. It may surprise you at first; perhaps you will smile, for I am going to say to each of you, "Be an angel!"

No doubt all the girls have at some time in their lives wished they were angels. Perhaps it was after seeing a Christmas pageant. Angels are so beautiful, and all of us have wished to be beautiful. I suspect some of the boys have wished they were angels. Angels have wings and all of us have wished we could fly like Peter Pan, wing our way over the tree tops and out into the wide blue sky.

Of course, all of you have seen pictures of angels. You have read about them in your Bible. But have you ever seen an angel in your home, your school or in your church? I suspect you are saying, "No, not a live one." Yet I am saying to each of you, "Be an angel." How can that be?

Long ago when the world was young and our Bible was new, men and women believed in angels. They believed angels lived close to God and were his very special messengers. When glad tidings of great joy came into their hearts, it seemed to them that special messengers brought them good news from God. When they found strength to overcome evil, and courage to face danger, they knew they were given strength beyond themselves. Their explanation was that God's angels had watched over them and helped them.

It is only natural that they pictured angels as being so very beautiful. One who brings good news or one who comes to help us in time of trouble is beautiful indeed.

It is natural also that they pictured angels as having wings. God's help is not always visible to the eye. Oftentimes it must have seemed that God and his angels were far off, yet help came so quickly —angels must have wings.

The people of olden times had good reason to believe in angels, but I find my belief in angels differs somewhat from theirs. They believed angels were creatures of another world, wholly different from human beings like you and me. I believe we can be God's messengers of peace and good will. We may not fly with wings, but love can speed our way to those in need. So I am saying to each of you, "Be an angel."

Notice directly following dinner today whether you fly out of doors or go into the kitchen and lend a helping hand. I have seen angels in the kitchen —live ones!

Listen today to the tone of your voice as you speak to others or about others. I have heard voices so sweet I knew they belonged to angels.

Notice if you think of others first and yourself last. Some people do. That is why I believe in angels. You may see one when you go home, or at school tomorrow—a live one.

But most important of all, before you sleep tonight, pray for God's help. Ask him to be with you and wing your feet that they may be swift and beautiful in the kindness of your words and deeds. God will help you to be an angel.

'All Good Gifts Around Us
Are Sent from Heaven Above'

Guests in God's World

By C. Willard Fetter

Thou preparest a table before me. Psalm 23:5.

DEAR to the heart of every Christian is the hope that when he comes to Journey's End he may be a guest in the Father's house where there are many mansions. May God grant that we may not lose our way to that place prepared for us, and that we may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Spiritual maturity begins, however, when we realize that we are God's guests in this world. We are not householders, but pilgrims; not landlords, but tenants; not owners, but guests. The verses in the 23rd Psalm which picture God as our gracious host are written in the present tense: "Thou preparest a table before me."

Man is tempted to think that he is the owner of the earth. Biblical truth is that God owns the universe and entertains men as his guests. The entertainment is lavish. Great privileges are granted the guests. We have a broad latitude of behavior in the presence of our host. God asks few questions about how we use the facilities he places at our disposal. In fact, our freedom is so great that we easily overlook the fact that we are guests and begin to think of ourselves as owners in fee simple of all we possess. To use as we will, God gives us great possessions. But we use them as his guests, and nothing is more sure than the fact that we shall carry nothing with us when we leave this world.

Meaning of Ownership

You may think that you own a little corner of the earth to do with it as you please. Then one day a man comes by and says, "We are building a new road through here, and you must let us take over this land." Protest your ownership as you will, the right of the total community to use what land it needs for the greatest good of the greatest number is thoroughly embedded in law. You will be paid a fair price, but you will not be allowed to decide, privately, whether or not you will sell. And if you sit it out with a shotgun across your knees you will lose in the end. The truth is that ownership is never outright but always limited by the right of eminent domain.

The problem of ownership is even more complicated when we get into the realm of business—especially business involving the use of natural resources and the great public utilities. Should ownership of these things be vested in private enterprise or in the government? The debate rages and shows no signs of abatement. What does ownership mean, what are its privileges, its limitations, its obligations?

Above all economic theories the Bible unfurls a banner on which is emblazoned the final fact of ownership: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein." Since the earth is God's, all human ownership implies obligation and responsibility to him.

My approach today is dominated by that great affirmation: "The earth is the Lord's." It is made personal by the faith, "Thou preparest a table before me." I live as a guest in God's world.

Let us put this in the form of a situation easily understood. You are invited to a house party by a wealthy friend. It is an invitation you would not dare to turn down, and would not care to if you could. As you and the other guests arrive you are greeted by your host who says, "During your stay here, the house is yours. You may use anything you find. There is food in the pantry. There are servants to serve you. Enjoy the library, the gardens, the record collection. The swimming pool is here to be used. Take a car from the garage if you need it. Come and go as you please. There are many guests and I may not be able to greet you personally very often, but while you are here, enjoy yourself."

Wouldn't that be a wonderful setting for a weekend? As guests of God we are in a similar position; this is a wonderful world he has placed at our disposal. Now, my question is, how shall we live as guests in God's world?

We Should Enjoy the World

To begin with, we ought to take our Host seriously when he says, "The house is yours, enjoy yourself." No gracious guest will spend his weekend at a house party cooped up in his room. A guest should show a lively interest in his host's possessions. In the library he will take down book after book, reading a paragraph here, a verse of poetry there, enjoying the texture of the bindings with his fingers and fine words with his mind. He will take time to appreciate the pictures that adorn the walls, and if he fails to understand them he will ask questions of his host or his fellow guests. When dinnertime comes he will relish new and wonderful dishes with a gourmet's satisfaction. At times he will search through the records to find music that

eals to him, but he will also try to learn what d of music the host loves and seek to appre- e it.

believe that God intends us to enjoy the world which we live as his guests. We should take a ly interest in things about us. Nature is here to oy. The world is here to explore. When a scien- delves into the mystery of nature he is doing at the Host expects. God had radium hidden in home; the Curries, house guests of God, were erested enough in his world to search it out. ence is a treasure hunt with scientists the ters. The treasure is here in God's world waiting be discovered and used and enjoyed.

t has never been possible for me to accept the a that as Christians we must not seek pleasure. anted that in the name of pleasure all kinds of ls can be indulged in, it is still true that when d created the world he saw that all he had made s very good, and turned it over to man to use l enjoy.

Enjoyment, of course, depends upon our inner ustment to God's world. Some people can be rounded with beauty and fail to see it; others with eyes and ears opened to the frescoes of the ator and the music of the spheres.

"Use the world," says God. "Dig the coal and rm your homes. Cut the trees and fashion the od into houses and desks and beds. Mine the d and fashion a wedding band to seal your love. ltivate the top soil and grow vegetables. Raise tle and eat meat. I own the earth, but you are guests."

Share and Conserve

While good guests will use and enjoy their host's me, they will not forget their obligation to use wisely, waste nothing, and leave it unmarred.

Did you read the comics last Sunday? Hiking in autumn woods with his father, Corky said, "Our master told us that in the woods we must re- mber that we are the guests of the animals and es and plants." That attitude will enable us to joy nature and leave it for others to enjoy. Across erica our landscapes are ruined by "litterbugs," d as one who loves nature unspoiled, I protest. go through the world forgetful that we are ests.

The issue is greater, however, than paper blowing oss the countryside and bottles and tin cans in r streams and lakes. In this vast continent of rth America we have assumed that God's gifts re inexhaustible. Farmers have pulled from the six inches of the earth all the crops they could d returned all too little plant food. The lumber dustry has slashed its way across our forests, cut- g vast areas, wasting a great deal of timber, and owing the waste to pile up and create fire hazards. st areas of prairie grass have been turned over th the plow, exposing the top soil to wind and n and creating a dust bowl. Coal has been ipped from hillsides leaving trenches as ugly ars. More crops are raised than are readily mar- ted and lie in caves while half the world starves.

The point of all this is that while we use the world as our own we must share it with others, not only others now alive but those who will come after us. Moreover, since we are only God's guests—not absolute owners of anything—we sin against God in spoiling and wasting and destroying that which is ours to tend and improve.

Human Resources

I speak not only with respect to so-called "natural resources" when I plead for conduct becoming a guest of God. The improvements that man has placed upon the earth are our heritage, too. How many fine old buildings have been allowed to fall into ruin because man forgot that he is only a guest, not an owner. Too many churches, built at great sacrifice by one generation, have been allowed to fall into bad repair because the new generation failed to take its stewardship seriously.

Human resources, above all others, we must consider as gifts from God and seek to conserve them. Who can tell what God is planning for the future when he gives us a little child? How constantly we need to be reminded that children are our most important natural resources. I do not speak of the chosen few but of the mass of them. Who knows which child will bring some new gift to us? Who would have suspected that a baby boy born in a frontier log cabin would one day be President Lincoln? Do you recall the surge of new hope that came to the world when the Salk polio vaccine was announced? Who gave us this miracle drug? Some extraordinary genius, marked as such at birth? No, it was an ordinary little boy, from an ordinary family, who grew up in an ordinary neighborhood and went to the public schools of a great city. "Talent," says the president of the American Education Association, "is where you find it, and we have the best opportunity of finding in a system of education concerned with developing the abilities of each and every child." As guests in God's world we must conserve the abilities of our human resources. That means good public schools, which I hope you will remember on election day, and good church schools, which I hope you will remember every day.

The Golden Rule

There is a third thing we ought to do whenever we are guests. We should form friendships with the other guests, seek to help them enjoy themselves, and not infringe upon their rights. If the host has provided a bedside radio we may play it, but not loudly enough to disturb those in adjoining rooms. We always remember that it is not our house; we are all guests.

In this vast house party that we call humanity, where all are guests of God, the same fine courtesy and friendliness and helpfulness should prevail among us.

It is when we forget that God is the host and we the guests that we start treating each other as *objects* rather than as persons. The prophets of the Old Testament approached kings and rulers with words something like this: "Your authority, your power, your position are gifts of God. You hold them in trust for the God who owns the earth."

They approached wealthy men and said, "You have your wealth as a trust from God. Therefore treat others, poorer than yourself, with respect." You see, if a political ruler forgets that he is God's guest and starts to think of himself as the owner of his country, he becomes a tyrant. If a man of wealth forgets that his wealth is his to enjoy only as long as he remains a guest in the world, and thinks that he owns it lock, stock and barrel, he will not hesitate to exploit other men to increase his wealth. Let a man remember that he must file a bill of particulars with God and he will treat his fellow men as persons, not things.

There are some lines in the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam which declare that with "a jug of wine, a loaf of bread—and thou . . . the wilderness were paradise enow." This is often taken as a statement of beautiful interpersonal relationship—which it is not! It simply says that there are three *things* which the poet happens to want for himself: wine, bread and "thou." The "thou" simply completes a list of things. When we forget that God owns the earth and that we and others are his guests we fall into the habit of looking at people as objects to be used or ignored, rather than persons to be accepted for themselves.

Expressions of Gratitude

It is only when we live in relationship to our divine Host that we are saved from that deadening concern with ourselves, our money, our comfort and our desires which is idolatry. Then we can enter into true personal relationship with others. And that is what makes a house party a party! It is that which makes this world lovely and agreeable—to be on friendly, helpful, person-to-person basis with our fellow men.

Let us remember that we are guests of God, and that others are his guests, too. And let us learn to live as those enjoying the hospitality of the same Host.

There is a final thing that must mark our deportment as guests of God. We must find a way or ways of expressing our gratitude for his hospitality. Gratitude is one of the forgotten arts of living. It is so easy to go through life forgetting to say, "Thank you." No gracious guest ever forgets. "Thank you, I had a lovely time," we say as we leave a party. Yet so frequently we forget our simple thanks to God.

In a camping manual last winter I read of how an outdoorsman discovered a sheepherder's stove. He saw a tent with a smoke pipe sticking out and went to visit the owner, who was cooking dinner. Having accepted an invitation to stay and eat, the visitor wrote, "I washed the dishes, thereby complying with the first rule of etiquette in the back country." Washing the dishes is a good way to say "Thank you."

During the war I knew a family in Dayton who always kept open house to their friends. People passing through were welcome to stop for a meal, a night or a week. Once I saw the wife and she was jubilant. "I just had a guest," she said, "who did more than talk. He was staying several days ar asked what he could do to help. When I told hi that there was nothing that was especially urge he looked around and decided to wash the kitch walls."

What better way can we say thank you to G than by pitching in and doing some chore for hi

Gifts to His Work

Departing guests write thank-you notes. W Christians believe that one of the finest ways saying thanks to God is by our gifts to his wor "Our tithe," wrote someone, "is our bread-an butter letter to God." It is the custom of man guests to say thank you by sending a gift to the host or hostess. Our gifts, brought to the altar o offering plates, are thank-you gifts to God.

No gift can possibly be great enough to expres the gratitude we should have for the privilege o being guests in God's world. Do you remember th story of the woman breaking the alabaster box o perfume and pouring it over Jesus' head? The were both guests in the house of Simon, but Jesu by the force of his personality was the real host an the woman wanted to thank him. Breaking the ala baster box and anointing him with the ointment wa a costly and daring act. But she did not count th cost; she only thought of what Jesus had done fo her. She was not concerned lest she give more tha her share, or appear too bold, or be left too poor t care for herself. Her only concern was that she le the Lord know of her love and her gratitude.

May we have that same spirit, giving with aban don our love offering of thanksgiving to God, ou gracious Host!

Mary Magdalene

(Continued from page 17)

This conviction, if it is really ours, means that we need not be driven to despair by the threat of the H-bomb, though we may well be concerned about it. Our faith does not depend upon the favorable outcome of all our earthly schemes but on the will of God, who is Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and Father of all those who believe in him. If men destroy civilization through the use of this terrible weapon, he has the power to bring the dead again to life. If they destroy the whole earth so that it is removed and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea, he has the power to create a new heaven and a new earth wherein righteousness dwells.

That is not to say that our lives may not be difficult and even dangerous. But it is to say that Christian faith, when understood and put to the test, will not be found wanting. May the conviction grow in us that he lives, and that because he lives we too shall live. Whatever life may bring to us, may it not be able for any great length of time to dispel the gladness which the first disciples felt when they saw the Lord!

One Among Many

By Donald E. Lewis

JESUS was tired. He had been teaching, helping, healing all day. Having crossed the Sea of Galilee with his band of disciples, he made his way up a mountain and sat down. But the people, awed by the miracles he had performed among the diseased that day, still followed and thronged about him. The hour was late, and the Master, looking about the multitude and knowing that they were hungry, asked of Philip, "How are we to buy bread, that these people may eat?" "Why Master, two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." "None of them have brought anything," said Andrew. "There is a lad here with five barley loaves and two small fish. But what are they among so many?"

Five thousand hungry people and only one lad with a basket of bread and fish. What is that among so many? We know the frustration of that question. So great a task, and so little with which to work! So much to do, and so few to do it! Such an urgent need, and such limited resources! What is one among so many?

What Difference Will It Make?

That's the thought that plagues us when we try to work for the good, the just, the right. What good is the little I can do? What difference will it make? Why bother with that Sunday school class—so few, so indifferent, and I have so little to offer? Why go to church, why try to support the good, the idealistic—so much to tear you down, so many working against you? What's the use? I, with my one little talent or half talent or seemingly no talent at all—one among so many!

But God said, "There's a lad here!" And God took that little lad with his basket of loaves and fish and fed five thousand people! Isn't it amazing how God works? Such a tremendous task, impossible! Such a great need, endless! And God works a miracle with

> a boy with a basket,
> or an orphan with a staff,
> or a soldier with a trumpet,
> or a lad with a sling,
> or a tax-collector with a pen,
> or a fisherman with a fiery tongue!

You and I worry about the great odds against us and become disheartened and discouraged. Why? Because we think power and strength and success are to be found in dollars and numbers and bigness and size. However God says it isn't that at all. Stop worrying and fretting about numbers, about the many who don't care, who fight the good and mock righteousness. Power isn't numbers. It's God. God is power and God touches one lad, or two, or twelve, and feeds a multitude, frees a nation, changes the course of history, saves a world!

God Needs Each of Us

One among many! But when that one is a Moses, or a Joshua, or a David, or a Peter, or a Paul, then what are the odds? All of them don't become heroes of the printed page, these people that God uses to work his miracles. Some are just lads, like this one. We don't even know his name—a lad with a basket. But mark this: God knew he was there—there when God needed him. And God used him to work a miracle—a lad with a basket. There's a sermon for you who become discouraged, and think it doesn't matter, and that it won't amount to anything. See what you can do or add with your poor little loaves and fish.

God knows you are there. And God needs your loaves and fish, small as they are. You are in God's plan.

God has need of you; and if you will be loyal and do whatever you can, no matter how small the effort may seem—be there, at your place, no matter how insignificant it may seem—God will take your humble contribution and bless it and work miracles of which you won't even be aware.

Ah, if you could only know how important you are to God and what he can do with that Sunday school lesson, or that hour with the youth, or that friendly handclasp, or that word of faith, or that visit to the sick, or the testimony of your presence at your place, with just a basket of loaves and fish, but there when he needs you!

Valued Contribution

On my desk is a Bible that was given to me by a Sunday school teacher fifteen years ago. It is not the handsomest Bible, in binding or print, that I have, but it has priority over all the rest, for it has been with me through two wars. Its inked lines are smeared by dropping sweat and dripping rain. Its pages are stained by German mud and Korean dust and American blood. That Sunday school teacher does not know how much comfort that book has brought to me when the going was rough. He has no vision of the groups of soldiers, lonely and afraid, wounded and dying, who were fed through

its pages. They were fed because he was there at his job, on a routine Sunday, with a group of boys more interested in football than the lesson. He probably thought he wasn't doing very much. But he was there! He gave a fifteen-year-old boy a Bible. And God took his contribution, his basket of loaves and fish and blessed it and fed thousands!

An unknown poet of years gone past has expressed the idea in these lines:

> Only a seed—but it chanced to fall
> In a little cleft of a city wall,
> And taking root, grew bravely up
> Till a blossom crowned its top.
>
> Only a thought—but the work it wrought
> Could never by tongue or pen be taught;
> For it ran through a life like a thread of gold.
> And the life bore fruit—a hundred fold.
>
> Only a word—but 'twas spoken in love,
> With a whispered prayer to the Lord above;
> And the angels in heaven rejoiced once more,
> For a newborn soul entered in by its door.

Dr. Leslie Weatherhead tells the following story: The father of Sir Hubert von Herkomer was persuaded to spend his last years with his distinguished son. The father, also a sculptor, asked for clay that he might while away the evenings at modeling. But hampered by age and enfeeblement and failing sight, the old man would put aside his work at night almost in despair. He could not make it what he wanted to make it, and would go to bed quite sad. But after the father had gone to bed, his son, the master sculptor, would work secretly at the clay. In the morning the old man would look at his work of the previous night and, never knowing that another hand had touched it, would exclaim with delight, "Why it isn't as bad as I thought!"

He Works Miracles

God works like that. He takes our little efforts for good and touches them and blesses them and works miracles of which we know not.

That is something of what Christ meant when he said in Mark 4:26, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how."

That's the faith the little twelve-year-old boy had when, ringing the bell of a house, he asked, "Lady would you buy some soap? I'm raising $5,000 to build our new church." Smiling, she said, "Are you doing it all by yourself?" "Oh, no," he exclaimed, "God's helping me!"

God is helping you and me, too. He takes our humble, fumbling efforts, and with his wisdom and his power uses them to work miracles. Like the passage in *My Lady of the Chimney Corner*, "God takes a han' wherever he can find it and jist duz what he likes with it. . . . His Spirit is everywhere lookin' for han's to use."

One among many. But how he needs your hands, and what blessings he can perform if you will consecrate your hands to him!

One among many. But what, then, are the odds when that one is touched by God?

Days of Decision

(Continued from page 14)

examining our convictions in the light of the new experience. In the days ahead each of us will have the opportunity of bearing living testimony to the Christlike way. By word and deed, in public meetings and in private conversations, we can have a meaningful part in a momentous crusade—the hastening of that time when

> At length there dawns the glorious day
> By prophets long foretold;
> At length the chorus clearer grows
> That shepherds heard of old.
> The day of dawning Brotherhood
> Breaks on our eager eyes,
> And human hatreds flee before
> The radiant eastern skies.

Christ's Standards

The personal nature of our opportunity cannot be overemphasized. Society will be Christian only when individuals are Christlike. The changes we are privileged to seek in our public life are but outward manifestations of the opportunities we have for changes within ourselves. My primary concern as a Christian is not what to do about the Negro but what to do about myself. Shall I remake my religion to fit my own low standards, or let God remake me to fit the high standards of Christ? Can I conquer those causes of my own prejudice—misunderstanding, pride, selfishness and fear—and the products of prejudice—resentments, intolerance, hatreds and discrimination? Can I cultivate the Christlike qualities which make for universal brotherhood—humility, understanding, patience and love?

Here is the heart of the gospel. Jesus insisted that the sins which separate us from each other are the sins which separate us from God. "If you are offering your gift at the altar," he said, "and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." As Christians today, shall we continue to rationalize in interpreting the second great commandment of our Lord, to love our neighbor as ourselves, or shall we ask God to transform our attitudes and actions, that we may understand what we say when we begin the Lord's Prayer with the words "Our Father . . . "?

Each Will Live His Answer

This is the real problem, the real opportunity, the real decision. Each of us will live his own answer. I pray that my answer and yours will be in the spirit of these words from Colossians 3:

> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience. forbearing one another and . . . forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you . . . And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts . . . And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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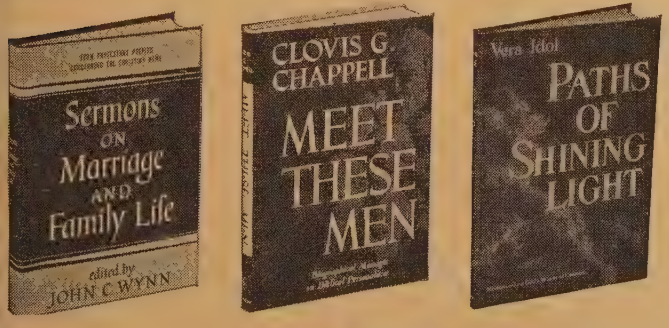

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'I Did Not Come to Judge the World'

By Pastor E. Lauriol

WHAT a disappointment for those who, in the world, are expecting a real judge! Those who hunger and thirst for justice, and who for food find nothing but a stone and for drink the gall of injustice! What a disappointment for those who are overcome by disillusionment, or those who see their good intentions misunderstood and misrepresented, with no possibility of reaffirming the truth.

Will justice never be rendered to these victims, these heroes, glorious but dead, or to these obscure martyrs, likewise dead? Was not the coming of Christ, and is it not always, their expectation?

Assuredly, and this expectation has not been unfulfilled, nor will it ever be. With this coming, something has surely been changed in the world. He who came is the One of whom the prophet said: "With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth," and who himself said: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied."

Take comfort. Because he has come iniquity will loose its hold, pain will loose its hold, the tomb will loose its hold. You who suffer, perhaps without respite, and perhaps without hope, you who are captives, tortured by illness, by events, by circumstances or by men, you who are foundering, as Christ did on Good Friday, with a cry of one falling into the abyss—all you who suffer, take comfort. He has come forth from the abyss, into the light of Easter, holding death strangled in His grasp. Through him justice will be done you. Your wounds will be glorious, your despair triumphant. Justice will be done you, a justice, moreover, which will yield a hundredfold, as did the good grain in the parable.

The Holy Scriptures declare that one day men will say: "Surely there is a reward for the righteous; there is a God who judges on earth"; certainly on that day when, as the ancient creed goes, "the Son of Man will come again to judge the quick and the dead."

■

But he did not come for that. He did not come to judge and to condemn. He came to save.

God would surely not have had to send Christ to judge the world and to condemn it. As the saying goes, he would have had only to "let evil run its course," the evil to which men have delivered themselves, the evil which would seem to have taken upon itself the work of tormenting and destroying. God had only to refrain from interfering and, very quickly—as the newspapers say the day after an execution—"justice would have been done." But it is precisely this justice, the justice which kills, the justice of men, that God did not will. Through Christ, God intervenes, not to judge but to save.

■

We men demand that the guilty apologize. This is even a rather subtle means to avoid forgiving them. God requires only that we let him save us. Too often, however, we try to make ourselves right with him by offering him the apology of our confessions of sin. But God has no use for them if they are not at least the expression of our desire to let ourselves be saved by him.

Those who accept, says Christ, do not come to judgment. For God is not interested in proving to us that we were wrong, any more than he has ever been interested in lamenting or waxing indignant over the *fait accompli.*

■

Our world shows many signs of being accursed. Nevertheless, it is not accursed, because Christ has come. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Whoever. Even the most wretched, the most despised and the most damned. God loves the most ordinary person with an extraordinary love. And for the most hopeless he always has hope.

Again, there is only one condition: that we believe in God rather than in our misery, our disgust with ourselves or our despair, that we not judge ourselves to be unforgivable, incapable of improvement and lost, when God has pardoned us and Christ has come, not to judge us but to save us.

Let us take seriously, first of all for ourselves, this decree of God concerning all men, a decree of victory and of life which God has proclaimed through Christ to our worst enemies: sin, pain and death. We have only to accept this joy, to surrender ourselves to Christ, to open to him our souls, folded up and crumpled in sullen shame, in obstinate evasion — like those flowers, which, folded up and crumpled during the night, open fresh and smooth, new under the fingers of the sun.

■

But this condition naturally implies a consequence. It is that we take seriously for others also this decree of God. If God, who knows the depths of our hearts, does not wish to judge like a judge, but to heal like a physician, by what right do we judge and condemn our brothers, we who know almost nothing of the truth of their inmost beings? By what right should we wish them to be lost? It is such a monstrous and absurd pretension that it shows clearly that the depth of our sin is also a depth of stupidity.

Judge not, said Christ.

Alas, God finds us in the very act of judging others, more often than saving them. Judging blindfold, we are bound to be unjust. We simplify everything so that the judgment we make or the indifference we assume may entail no complications. And we should hold out a helping hand.

"There is nothing we can do about it," we say.

God did not say that, and he does not allow us to say it, either of ourselves or of others. Christ himself is this prohibition. God, who had the wisdom and power to judge, did not want the horrible satisfaction that comes from judging. How can we, who know nothing of the painful and marvelous secrets of men's souls, their struggles, their distress, their mistakes, which we always interpret as crimes, and often wrongly, their sufferings, their cries for help, their thirst to be loved—how can we dare assume, without hesitation, a right which God denies himself?

This is not to say that there are not all around us guilt and guilty people, sometimes very guilty, creatures of perdition. What a marvelous discovery! For whom is forgiveness if not for the guilty, for whom is salvation if not for the lost? And we are too apt to forget that in God's sight we were and are included among them.

We who are guilty, let us at least behave towards the other guilty ones as the Holy God behaves towards us. Let us close the accounts of our wrongs and our faults, our disappointments and our discouragements. Let us not condemn ourselves to the forced labor of bitterness, grief and remorse. Let us not shut ourselves up in this prison which Christ called "the outer darkness," when the Father opens to us the gates of his house.

Let us love this Father, in ourselves and in our brothers. For his sake let us measure our own worth and that of our brothers by the price which God paid for each one of us: the blood of Christ on Golgotha.

The more I trust my neighbours, my friends and all men, the more I shall sense with delight the trust which God had set in me—however incomprehensible that may seem to be.

The more I have to forgive, the more I shall know myself forgiven.

The more I give of joy, the more I shall have of this joy.—*Reprinted by permission from the Nov.-Dec. 1955* Federation News Sheet *of the World's Student Christian Federation.*

"IF Messiah should come today," zaddik said, "and say, 'You a better than the others,' then I wou say to him, 'You are not Messiah.'" *Martin Buber,* The Legend of the Baa Shem *(Harper). Used by permission.*

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Ensl

What Really Is His Secret?

SOME months ago I received a letter. In itself that is no especial news. The letter was promptly answered . . . I was going to add "of course," but I refrain, in a manner slightly reminiscent of Cicero, who was wont to indicate in fairly full form what he "would have said" had the time permitted. I refrain, not so much to emulate the noble Roman, but for fear lest I embarrass some of the readers of this estimable journal, whose own desks have letters—some of them from me—long unanswered, and also lest thereby I tempt some biblically minded reader to ponder the pleasant possibilities of a modern identification, through the subtleties of allegorical interpretation—still a popular clerical indoor sport—hidden in Luke 18:11. For those who do not chance to have Bibles at hand and who, like many of my students in New Testament, are a bit hazy in their own detailed knowledge of the contents of the Book about which they speak with such easy and sweeping superlatives, I will give a helpful hint, by remarking that I have long felt that the criticism received through the years by this man of Holy Writ has been a bit overdrawn. Yes, I frankly confess that I too have thanked God, albeit not publicly, for I remember Matthew 6:6 and am firmly of the opinion that the author of that bit of pointed direction knew what he was talking about. After this aside, let me return to the letter.

It was an intelligent letter and written by an obviously intelligent man. Since he had found my column in the then current issue of interest, I do not need labor the point of this double intelligence. In his letter the writer said—and here I will follow the style of a modern master of pulpit technique, who, when referring to what the Almighty said (or has been reputed to have said), invariably uses these sonorous words: ". . . and God said, and I quote, 'Thou shalt . . .' " I presume the distinguished orator does this from a sense of modesty lest his congregation be confused and think that he is actually giving expression to his own words. "So nigh is grandeur to our dust . . ."; or should the order of the two nouns be reversed? But these introductory remarks are consuming too much space. Back to the letter, "and I quote": "But you have me all agog over this nameless preacher that you rhapsodize over as 'amazing.' Since you are not ordinarily given to such strong compliments for someone, I'd like to know more abo him . . . You give two strong hin he is down to earth and speaks to c condition. All of which you know bet than I do can mean many things many men. What really is his secr Perhaps the ineffable quality is stron something you see and feel but c never put into words. At any rate, am still on the hunt for the secret telling the Good News winsomely a effectually."

Yes, my brother, I did give tw strong hints, and you spotted the both. I can spell it out a little clear without subjecting my good friend Cape Cod to embarrassing spot ident fication. His secret? I can answer th query in words (mostly) of one sy lable: He talks about things he know about, about matters of concern to h people. In a word, he lives where the live. He may be able to see a bit farthe than some of them do, but he neve "talks over their heads" or gives th impression that although his face an hands are those of the local preache his voice is, "of course," that of th Lord God Almighty. He has taste the sweet wine of success, but it ha not gone to his head; he has also had few bitter draughts, and they haven made him sour.

The subjects he talks about are sub jects he knows about. He does not see to emulate the famous preacher c dusky eloquence by "unscruting th unscrutable." He either lets the uni verse severely alone or is content t tackle it in very small doses. He doe not jauntily set forth its secrets in ten easy lessons, with glittering generali ties (the gilt of which has worn a bi thin through careless handling o mouthing) or with that pulpit devic retained from examination days in seminary (or Bible school) of "touch ing only the high spots," and, with the status of years of holy experience, now suggesting, "O my dear but ignorant people, how much more I *could* tel you, but, alas, you are not worthy: you cannot bear it now." He seems quite content to let God run the world as the latter sees fit, and never, so far as I have heard his sermons, has he volun teered any ecclesiastical advance re leases as to what the High and Lofty One is thinking about doing tomorrow. He appears to be extremely happy in the service of the One he obviously loves and seeks to serve, but he is not "rash with his mouth" and seems al-

ways to realize that since God is in heaven and he upon earth, his words may with profit be few. That, my good brothers of the cloth, is another biblical paraphrase, this time from an Old Testament book. Yes, I'll be generous: it is Ecclesiastes 5:2. This paraphrased text is one I commend to you for stimulus in your hurried meditation and reflection 'twixt golf course and pulpit.

To revert to the preacher, I would add that in my opinion—I speak warily here lest I seem to fall into the same pit suggested above—he, and preachers like him (for, thank God, he is not unique, just uncommon) have a better warrant for the proud title, "a man after God's own heart," than do some upon whom said title has been a bit jauntily bestowed.

The Rebuke

THERE were three of us crucified that day.
My name you know.
My myriad friends have seen to that:
Mark and Matthew, Luke and John,
Peter and Paul and the rest.

From Jerusalem to Evanston,
Bishops, priests and other reverend men
These many hundred years
Have told my death.

In stone and iron,
In brass and wood,
My cross
Throughout the world has stood.

But I was not alone on that harsh hill.
Two others hung with me—
With you, but not with me,
Their very names a legend and a guess.

They were my brothers
Though by your reckoning felons, thieves, maybe.
Their pain in body great as mine,
Their mothers' hearts stricken as my mother's,
Their sweat and thirst like mine.
And what is more, they dreaded hell
As I did not.

I have a secret which you should have known—
My Father loved them.
And why judge you
That only two of us that day did reach the throne?

So do not think you honor me the more
By loving one the less.
A text for sermons now and then;
Praise for the penitent, by all lips blessed,
And scorn for one you did not think confessed.

So this I say:
You would know and love me better
If on your altars,
On your hallowed shrines
Of wood and stone,
You gave them room—put me between them still.
I did not die alone.

ELLIS JONES HOUGH.

The Optimism of Grace

(Continued from page 7)

sat where you sit. There came to him when he was in this place a vision of Jesus Christ as the hope of the world; and he began to dream of

. . . firths beyond Forth
And hills beyond Pentland.

After completing an arts course with outstanding distinction, he read divinity at St. Mary's. In his final year, the church invited him to go to India. The Church of Scotland, up to that time, had never had a missionary. It was a tremendous venture into the unknown. But Alexander Duff accepted; and thus it was given to this ancient university to send out one of her most distinguished sons as the first missionary of the Church of Scotland.

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Book Reviews

FROM FAITH TO FAITH. By **B. Davie Napier.** Harper, $3.00. The author writes of this book that it "comes out of classroom and platform lectures," and the book itself displays pre-eminently the virtues of its origin: vitality, clarity and a content carefully selected and skillfully arranged to support the main emphases. (A certain facetiousness which may at times distract the reader from the point at issue—"scalpel happy" critics or the stuttering of the playmates of Isaiah's son—perhaps also originated in the classroom to recapture wandering student attention.)

The introduction stresses the necessity of seeing the Old Testament as a whole in order rightly to understand its parts. Although the author may have exaggerated the surgical character of the work of the last century, he has certainly by his recognition of the essential oneness of the Old Testament given his readers a unified presentation of complex biblical material which is effective and convincing. The method is especially successful in the first half of the book, which deals almost exclusively with Genesis, and in the final chapter, "Law." The "wisdom literature" is omitted as "relatively peripheral."

Chapter I, "Myth," begins with a quotation from Psalm 104, focusing the reader's attention at once on the fundamental faith of Israel— faith in God as Creator and sustainer of all life. The Old Testament understanding of the nature of man and man's relation to God as expressed in Psalms and in Genesis 2-11 follows. This chapter and the next, "Legend," show masterly adroitness in the use of the evidence for separate sources (very clearly presented in considerable detail) to emphasize the distinguishing characteristics of Hebrew faith.

In chapter II the frequent confusion between recognition of the accuracy of the background of the stories and acceptance of the stories themselves as factual is firmly eliminated (pp. 70-73). Nor are the original and varied purposes of the old stories—etiological, etymological, pure entertainment—ignored in the stress on the fundamental purpose of the sequence as a whole to express the faith of Israel and to "mirror" the experience of the nation. "The characters in Genesis speak their own lines . . . as well as the lines of the theological drama of God's concern in love to reconcile man and himself."

The chapter on history, treating I Samuel 12—I Kings 11, and that on prophecy, limited to the eighth century sections of Isaiah, are more conventional. The section on King Solomon is entertaining. Half of the chapter on Isaiah is given to the political history of the period.

The final chapter on the law succeeds within 18 pages in conveying an understanding both of the growth and interrelation of the law codes, and of the main emphases and underlying purpose

of the Jewish law. So much of importance, so fairly and readably presented, is seldom found in brief compass.

Much of this book will command itself to the college teacher as valuable collateral reading for his students. The general reader will find here, persuasively set forth, a point of view which will add to his enjoyment of the Old Testament and to his appreciation of the faith of the men who wrote it. The specialists will enjoy quarreling with details. Some in all groups, like the reviewer, in spite of complete agreement with the value of and need for the emphasis on "the context of the whole," may feel as they read some of the more elaborated parallels that they have strayed into the anteroom of Philo of Alexandria.—*Louise Pettibone Smith, Robert D. Campbell Visiting Professor of Religion, Wells College, Aurora, N. Y.*

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T.A.G.

Pulpit Calendar

Apr. 1—Easter.

Apr. 8—1st Sunday after Easter.

Apr. 15—Christian College Day.

Apr. 22—3rd Sunday after Easter.

Apr. 29—4th Sunday after Easter.

May 6—Rural Life Sunday.

May 6-13—National Family Week.

May 10—Ascension Day.

May 13—Festival of the Christian Home (Mother's Day).

May 20—Whitsunday (Pentecost).

May 27—Trinity Sunday.

May 30—Memorial Day.

June 3—2nd Sunday after Pentecost.

June 10—Children's Sunday.

June 17—4th Sunday after Pentecost.

June 24—5th Sunday after Pentecost.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observations of national or religious significance.)

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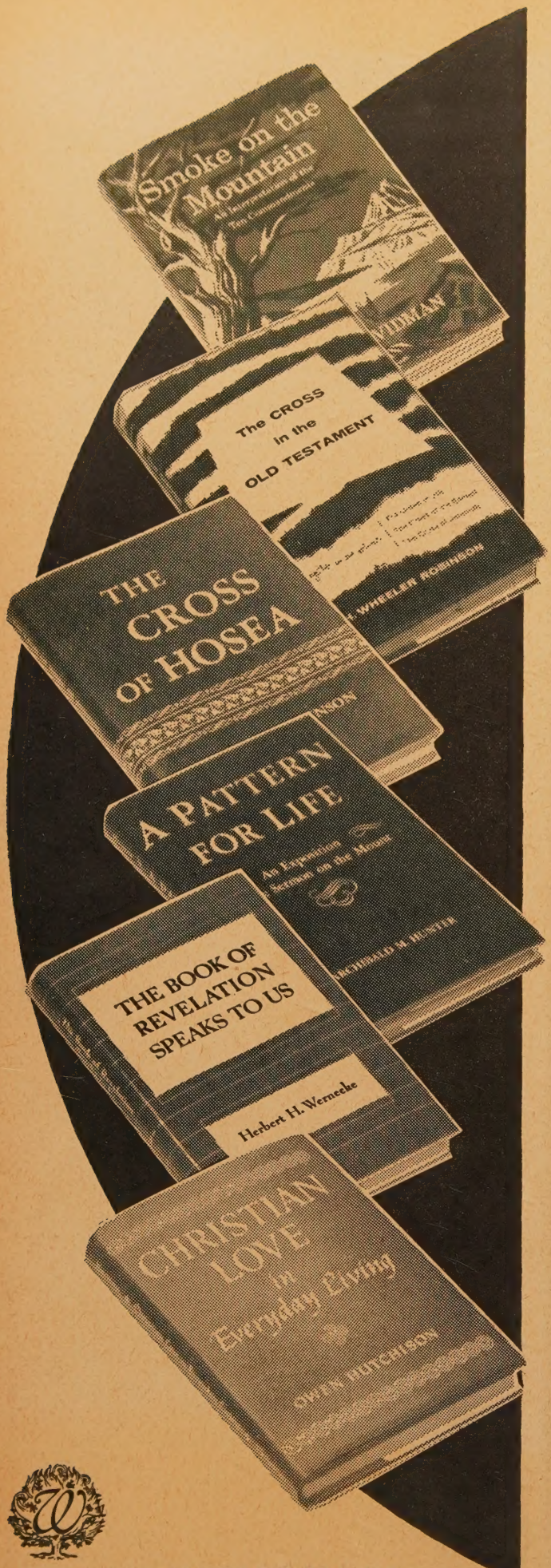
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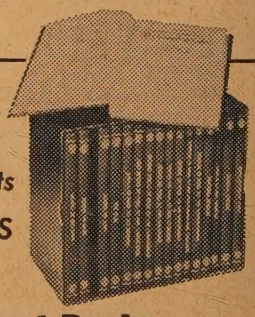

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